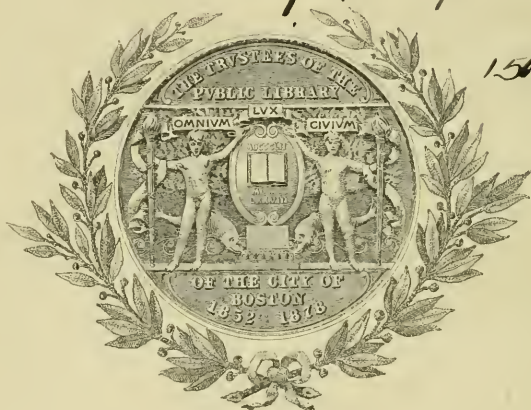


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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

JAMES J. DAVIS, Secretary

CHILDREN'S BUREAU

GRACE ABBOTT, Chief

CHILD LABOR
IN REPRESENTATIVE
TOBACCO-GROWING AREAS

By

HARRIET A. BYRNE

2

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR,
CHILDREN'S BUREAU,
Washington, June 26, 1925.

SIR: There is transmitted herewith a report on "Child Labor in Representative Tobacco-Growing Areas." This report is the eighth of a series of studies of the labor of children on farms, with special reference to school attendance, which have been conducted by the industrial division of the Children's Bureau.

The investigation upon which the report was based was planned and carried out under the general supervision of Ellen Nathalie Matthews, director of the industrial division of the Children's Bureau. The field work was directed by Harriet A. Byrne, who has also written the report.

Acknowledgment is made of the cooperation given the bureau by State and county officials, local school principals, and teachers.

Respectfully submitted.

GRACE ABBOTT, *Chief.*

Hon. JAMES J. DAVIS,
Secretary of Labor.

CHILD LABOR IN REPRESENTATIVE TOBACCO-GROWING AREAS¹

INTRODUCTION

From the time tobacco is planted until the leaf is ready for market a great deal of the work necessary in its cultivation is done by hand. The amount of hand labor necessary has been only slightly reduced by the use of machinery and the application of principles of scientific farming. Much of this work can be done by children because it requires merely watchfulness and care rather than physical strength. Although no statistics are available concerning the number of children working on tobacco, children are known to be employed extensively on this crop, to which in five States—Kentucky, North Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee, and South Carolina—more than 1,500,000 acres are devoted.²

Tobacco is grown to some extent in 42 States, but important tobacco-producing regions include certain parts of Kentucky, Tennessee, and Ohio; a group of South Atlantic States—South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia; and the Connecticut Valley in New England. On the large farms in the Southern States the owners have tenants. On the small farms the owner and his family do most of the work. Among the tenant class and the small owners the acreage of tobacco worked depends upon the number of hands in the family, always including the children. In New England much of the tobacco is raised on a commercial scale by large corporations, and most of the work on this tobacco is done by hired laborers. A few of these reside on the farms the whole year, but by far the largest number, including many children, are imported for the season, usually only for harvesting.

The districts selected for the present study are typical, in the opinion of State directors of agricultural extension work, county agricultural agents, and State and local school officers, of these three tobacco-producing areas and of the different kinds of tobacco produced. These districts consist of parts of Shelby and Christian Counties in Kentucky, where Burley and other manufacturing and export varieties of tobacco are grown; parts of Florence County in South Carolina, and of Halifax County in Virginia—both in the Bright tobacco belt, producing chiefly a manufacturing and export type of tobacco; and parts of Hartford County in Connecticut and of Hampshire County in Massachusetts in the Connecticut Valley,

¹ This study is one of a series of studies of rural child labor made by the United States Children's Bureau. The following reports in the series have been or are to be published: No. 115, Child Labor and the Work of Mothers in the Beet Fields of Colorado and Michigan; No. 123, Child Labor on Maryland Truck Farms; No. 129, Child Labor in North Dakota; No. 130, Child Labor and the Work of Mothers on Norfolk Truck Farms; No. 132, Work of Children on Truck and Small-Fruit Farms in Southern New Jersey; No. 134, The Welfare of Children in Cotton-Growing Areas of Texas; No. 151, Child Labor in Fruit and Hop Growing Districts of the Northern Pacific Coast; Work of Children on Illinois Farms (in preparation).

² Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Vol. VI, pt. 2, Agriculture, p. 74. Washington, 1922.

where cigar-leaf tobacco is extensively grown. City children from three schools in Hartford and five schools in Springfield who worked on the tobacco crop in the Connecticut Valley were included in the study.

Children under 16 years of age³ on September 1, 1922, were interviewed by agents of the Children's Bureau either at school or in some cases at home if they were not enrolled in school or were absent on the day of the agent's visit or lived in districts in which the school had closed for the term.⁴ Detailed information on their farm work was obtained from all those who had worked on the 1922 tobacco crop not less than 12 days. School-attendance records also were obtained covering the year from February 1, 1922, to January 31, 1923, in Kentucky and South Carolina, and from May 1, 1922, to April 30, 1923, in Virginia, Massachusetts, and Connecticut.

Of the 2,278 child workers found and interviewed, 563 were in Kentucky, 606 in South Carolina and Virginia, and 1,109 in the Connecticut Valley.

KENTUCKY

THE CHILD WORKERS AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT

As was previously stated, the study in Kentucky was made in Christian and Shelby Counties. Although the total number of children enrolled in the 21 Christian County school districts surveyed was 1,090, only 580 were interviewed. The remainder either were absent from school at the time of the agent's visit or lived in districts where the schools had closed. Of the children interviewed 277 had worked at least 12 days on the tobacco crop. One child not enrolled was included, thus making a total of 278. In Shelby County 1,268 were enrolled in the 19 districts surveyed, 927 were interviewed, and 283 were found to have worked not less than 12 days on the tobacco crop. Two children not enrolled were here included, making a total of 285.

The children were of native white and of negro parentage. Both counties have a large negro population. Negroes constituted more than one-third of the population of Christian County and one-sixth of that of Shelby County, while in the State as a whole negroes form less than one-tenth of the population. About one-half of the families represented in the study in Christian County and one-fifth of those in Shelby County were negro. Illiteracy was much greater in Christian County than in Shelby County,⁵ and twice as large a proportion of the fathers of children studied in Christian County were illiterate as was found to be the case in Shelby County.

In the northern part of Christian County, the second largest in the production of tobacco in the State, much of the land is in timber or uncleared, and that under cultivation is rather infertile. The farms are small and the farmers, most of whom are white, are not prosperous. In the southern part of the county the land is rich, the

³ In Kentucky children under 7 years of age were not included.

⁴ The Children's Bureau investigation was begun in February, 1923, and concluded in June of the same year.

⁵ Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Vol. III, Population, pp. 369 and 380. Washington, 1922.

farms are relatively large, and many of them are worked by tenants. Shelby County, which is twelfth in the State in the production of tobacco, is in the fertile blue-grass region. Many of its farms are large, and a great deal of the tobacco is raised by tenants.

The average acreage per farm in Christian County is 83.8 and in Shelby County 88.2.⁶ Among the families whose children were included in the study the average acreage of the farms owned or rented was 88 and 77 for the two counties. Only 20 families whose children had worked in Christian County, and only 15 in Shelby County, lived on farms of 200 acres or more. Only a few of the negro farmers worked as much as 100 acres, and a fairly large proportion in each county were on farms of less than 25 acres. Most of the large farms were worked in small lots by tenant families.

In each county about one-half of the families represented in the study were tenants. Most of the remainder owned the farms which they worked, but a few were the families of farm laborers. Nearly three-fourths of the tenant families in Christian County were "croppers."

The cropper does not pay a cash rent. He works whatever land the landlord marks out for him and plants it as the landlord pleases. He shares the expense of seed and fertilizer, and the landlord furnishes the house, work animals, and implements. The cropper shares the profits of the crop after the tobacco has been sold. Frequently the contract is only an oral one; in some cases the cropper accepts any conditions which the landlord imposes and does not even know how many acres he is working. He usually possesses nothing but a few household articles, and since there is little to hold him he moves from one farm to another quite often, sometimes every year. Less than one-third of the tenant families represented in the study in Shelby County, where there were fewer negroes than in Christian County, were croppers.

About two-thirds of the child workers in both counties worked on only the home farm. More than one-half of the remainder in Christian County and nearly all in Shelby County had worked at home and on some other farm as well. A few children, chiefly laborers' children who worked on the farms where their fathers were employed, had done all their work away from home.

Of the 563 child workers studied in Kentucky, 414 were boys and 149 were girls. Three-fourths of these were under 14 years of age, close to one-half were under 12, and more than one-fifth were under 10 years of age. There were 371 white children among these and 192 negroes, both groups of about the same ages; and proportionately as many white as negro workers were girls.

Table 1 shows the age and sex of white and negro children who worked on the tobacco crop in Christian and Shelby Counties, Ky.

⁶ Ibid., Vol. IV, pt. 2, Agriculture, pp. 396, 404. Washington, 1922.

TABLE 1.—*Age and sex of white and negro children who worked on the tobacco crop; Christian and Shelby Counties, Ky.*

Age and sex	Children 7 to 15 years of age, inclusive											
	Christian County						Shelby County					
	Total		White		Negro		Total		White		Negro	
	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution ¹	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution ¹	Number	Per cent distribution ¹
Total children.....	278	100.0	141	100.0	137	100.0	285	100.0	230	100.0	55	100.0
7 years.....	12	4.3	9	6.4	3	2.2	12	4.2	10	4.3	2	3.6
8 years, under 10.....	48	17.3	23	16.3	25	18.2	47	16.5	42	18.3	5	9.1
10 years, under 12.....	77	27.7	44	31.2	33	24.1	67	23.5	52	22.6	15	27.3
12 years, under 14.....	73	26.3	37	26.2	36	26.3	89	31.2	72	31.3	17	30.9
14 years, under 16.....	54	19.4	25	17.7	29	21.2	61	21.4	49	21.3	12	21.8
Age not reported.....	14	5.0	3	2.1	11	8.0	9	3.2	5	2.2	4	7.3
Boys.....	186	100.0	101	100.0	85	100.0	228	100.0	185	100.0	43	-----
7 years.....	8	4.3	7	6.9	1	1.2	10	4.4	8	4.3	2	-----
8 years, under 10.....	29	15.6	14	13.9	15	17.6	41	18.0	37	20.0	4	-----
10 years, under 12.....	53	28.5	31	30.7	22	25.9	49	21.5	37	20.0	12	-----
12 years, under 14.....	46	24.7	26	25.7	20	23.5	69	30.3	58	31.4	11	-----
14 years, under 16.....	38	20.4	20	19.8	18	21.2	52	22.8	41	22.2	11	-----
Age not reported.....	12	6.5	3	3.0	9	10.6	7	3.1	4	2.2	3	-----
Girls.....	92	100.0	40	-----	52	100.0	57	100.0	45	-----	12	-----
7 years.....	4	4.3	2	-----	2	3.8	2	3.5	2	-----	-----	-----
8 years, under 10.....	19	20.7	9	-----	10	19.2	6	10.5	5	-----	1	-----
10 years, under 12.....	24	26.1	13	-----	11	21.2	18	31.6	15	-----	3	-----
12 years, under 14.....	27	29.3	11	-----	16	30.8	20	35.1	14	-----	6	-----
14 years, under 16.....	16	17.4	5	-----	11	21.2	9	15.8	8	-----	1	-----
Age not reported.....	2	2.2	-----	-----	2	3.8	2	3.5	1	-----	1	-----

¹ Per cent distribution not shown where base is less than 50.

THE WORK OF CHILDREN IN TOBACCO CULTURE

Preparing seedbeds and fields.

In March or earlier the tobacco seed is sowed in plant beds. Children help to prepare these beds in the late winter and early spring. They cut, carry, and pile on the plot selected for the beds the brush and poles which are burned to sterilize the soil, or, if sterilization to reduce fungous diseases and the growth of weed seeds is by steam, the children help to carry water. They also work the soil with hoe, spade, or plow, and some of them plant the seed and cover the beds with cheesecloth to protect the seeds and later the plants from cold. In Christian County 60 children and in Shelby County 134 children did such work. Young children do not often help in the preparation of the beds. More than one-half of the children who did this work were 12 years of age or older.

At the same time that the seedbeds are being prepared and sowed the fields are put in shape by plowing, harrowing, and fertilizing, then the final harrowing and marking off of rows, averaging 3½ to 4 feet apart, for transplanting. Many boys plow and harrow. (See p. 9.) A few reported that they had done marking or "laying off" of rows, using a plow or other implement.

Transplanting.

Transplanting is done when the plants are about two months old, usually the middle of May in Kentucky. This work is done by hand in the Christian County districts studied and in part of Shelby County. In Christian County 272 children and in Shelby County 243, or a total of 515 in Kentucky, reported having had some share in hand transplanting. In this work the children draw the plants from the seedbed, drop them at the marked intervals in the rows, and set them in their places. (See Pl. I, Figs. 1, 2, 4, facing p. 18.) Occasionally a peg is used to make the hole in which the plant is to be put, but more often the worker uses the first two fingers of his right hand. With his left hand he inserts the plant, patting the soil firmly around the roots and stalk, bending over for the whole process. Often an adult or an older child draws the plants—a process which requires the exercise of considerable judgment—while younger ones drop or set them, and sometimes the younger children do only the dropping. One-third of the children studied in both counties (100 in Christian and 90 in Shelby) had worked at some two of these transplanting operations. All three had been done by 177 children, about one-fifth of whom were under 10 years of age. A large proportion of the children who only set plants were 12 years old or older, while more than two-fifths of those who only dropped plants were under 10 years of age.

A machine transplanter can not be employed very profitably on small crops and was seldom used on the farms where the children included in the study worked. The machine transplanter automatically regulates the distance of setting, the application of water, and the firm establishment of the plant in the ground. But the "feeders," who sit in a cramped position at the rear of the machine close to the ground (see Pl. I, fig. 3, facing p. 18) and alternately feed plants into the machine, must keep their attention fixed on putting the plants into the machine at the proper moment. Feeding is the work done by child workers. About one-seventh of the children in Shelby County (41, including 1 girl) had worked on a transplanting machine. No machine transplanting was done in the Christian County districts.

Cultivating.

Soon after the field has been set the work of cultivation begins and continues throughout the season. A large proportion of the children had cultivated. This consists of ordinary surface cultivation to maintain a loose fine mulch about the plant and to keep down the weeds. Much of the work is done by machine, but some hand hoeing is necessary. In the two counties 431 children had done hoeing. Only 193 children had cultivated by machine and two-thirds of these were in Christian County, where not only are the tobacco acreages larger than in Shelby County but the farmers are also less prosperous and children do more of the heavy work. More than one-third of the children had cultivated at least two weeks, and about one-fourth of these had cultivated four weeks or more. Proportionately more of these were in Christian County than in Shelby County, for machine cultivating, which many of the Christian County children did, has to be repeated frequently. In Shelby County weeding was done by 133 children, 28 of them under 10 years of age. In Christian County only 2 reported weeding.

Topping.

The next process in tobacco culture is "topping," which is done when about one-half of the plants in the field have developed seed heads—in Kentucky about the middle of July. It is done by breaking off the top of the plant so as to force all the growth into the leaves left on the plant and to cause these lower leaves to develop more fully. The worker steps from plant to plant breaking off this upper part, exercising his judgment as to where each should be broken. Younger children can not do this so well; almost three-fifths of the ones who had done such work were at least 12 years of age. In Christian County one-half of the children included in the study, and in Shelby County, where proportionately more of the workers were 12 years of age or older, about three-fourths, or a total in both counties of 340 children, had done this kind of work.

Suckering.

The process called "suckering" follows immediately upon topping and continues until harvest time. It consists of breaking off the lateral branches or suckers which develop in the axils of the upper leaves after the top of the plant has been removed. As they continue to come out during the growing season the workers must go over the field two or three and sometimes four times, since it is important that all the plants be ready for harvest at about the same time. This is a tedious task, the more so since the worker must bend lower and lower over the plants as he removes the topmost suckers and then the next ones, using first one hand and then the other. Suckering is a task which most children dislike very much. They complained of their backs aching from bending over, of their hands hurting from pulling off the suckers, and of getting sticky all over from the juice of the tobacco plants. Some of the workers reported that their hands became blistered, their skin was irritated by the gummy substance present on the leaves, and the odor from the green tobacco was so strong that it made them ill. Suckering is done during the hottest months of the year.

Suckering is considered distinctly children's work. It was done by 265 children in Christian County and 261 in Shelby County, nearly one-half of these being less than 12 years of age. About two-thirds of the children in the former county and one-third in the latter, where tobacco acreages are smaller, had suckered for two weeks or more, and one-sixth in the two counties had worked as long as four weeks.

Worming.

The removal of worms, like the removal of suckers, is considered distinctly children's work, and nearly as many children had done this work as had done suckering. Almost one-half of the children were under 12 years of age, and 22 of them were under 8. Although it is most often done simultaneously with suckering it often must be done before suckering is begun. The worker examines each leaf carefully on both sides to find any worms which may be on it and either destroys the worms with a twist of the thumb and forefinger or puts them in a tin can or other receptacle which he carries, to be burned later. This work is so disagreeable and, according to some workers, so irritating to the skin that occasionally premiums

are offered for it or the children are threatened with severe punishment if worms are found on the plants after the work is finished. The necessity for hand worming has been decreased to some extent by using arsenate of lead as a spray, by taking extra care of the ground before the plants are set out, and by allowing fowls, especially turkeys, to enter the fields. This may account for the fact that in Shelby County, where both cultural and economic conditions were better, proportionately only half as many children as in Christian County had to worm as long as two weeks. Yet nearly one-half of the children in both counties who reported worming had done this work two weeks or longer, and 81 had wormed for four weeks.

Harvesting.

Harvesting begins about the middle of August and continues until late in September. In Kentucky the tobacco is harvested by cutting the whole plant. The worker grasps the stalk near its base with one hand and with a small hatchet or corn knife in the other hand cuts down through the center of the stalk nearly to the bottom, then bends the plant away from him and cuts it off just above the ground. Comparatively few children (62 in Christian County and 120 in Shelby County) had cut tobacco, as this work is considered too heavy for them. One-half of those who had done the work in Christian County and one-third who had done it in Shelby County were 14 years of age or over.

After the plant has been cut it is laid upon the ground to remain until the leaves have wilted enough to be handled without breaking. It is then hung by the stalk upon a lath 4 feet long by 1 inch square. Children carry and drop the empty sticks, fill and carry the filled sticks to the wagon or barn, or load them upon the wagon. Although a single empty stick weighs but a trifle, a bundle of them is quite heavy, especially as the children carry as many sticks as they can. A single stick filled with tobacco stalks may weigh 25 pounds or more.⁷

Housing.

After the tobacco has been taken to the curing barn it is "housed." Children who help at this work usually hand the sticks filled with the green tobacco to men who hang them up in tiers in the barn. A few child workers had themselves hung the sticks, but since the top tiers are in many cases 30 feet from the ground the hanging is generally done by men. Three times as many children had helped house tobacco in Shelby County as in Christian County, and proportionately many more young children (13 under 10 and 3 under 8) in the former than in the latter county.

Miscellaneous work.

When the tobacco is cured the sticks are taken down from the tiers and "bulked" or placed in neat piles on the barn floor. Sometimes children do the piling; sometimes they merely receive the sticks and hand them to some one else to pile. Proportionately many more children in Shelby County than in Christian County had done this work.

⁷ Weight reported by United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Plant Industry.

The next process, called "stripping," consists of taking the leaves from the stalk, sorting or grading them according to size, and tying them into bunches called "hands," fastened by winding one leaf tightly around the base of such a bunch or hand. Sometimes the child workers only tied the leaves which an older worker had graded. Stripping had been done by 116 children for two weeks or more, and by 32 for as long as four weeks. Still other work done by children is to pick up and tie the leaves which fall during housing, attend to the fires during the curing, load the tobacco, and haul it to town.

Table 2 shows the operations in tobacco culture performed by white and negro children in Christian and Shelby Counties, Ky.

TABLE 2.—Operations in tobacco culture performed by white and negro children; Christian and Shelby Counties, Ky.

Operations in tobacco culture	Children 7 to 15 years of age, inclusive											
	Christian County						Shelby County					
	Total		White		Negro		Total		White		Negro	
	Num- ber ¹	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber ¹	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent
Total children.....	278	100.0	141	100.0	137	100.0	285	100.0	230	100.0	55	100.0
Field:												
Transplanting.....	272	97.8	137	97.2	135	98.5	284	99.6	229	99.6	55	100.0
Suckering.....	265	95.3	132	93.6	133	97.1	261	91.6	210	91.3	51	92.4
Worming.....	243	87.4	112	79.4	131	95.6	244	85.6	198	86.1	46	83.3
Cultivating.....	232	83.5	120	85.1	112	81.8	252	88.4	201	87.4	51	92.4
Hanging.....	142	51.1	64	45.4	78	56.9	134	47.0	101	43.9	33	59.8
Topping.....	137	49.3	68	48.2	69	50.4	203	71.2	164	71.3	39	70.7
Picking up leaves.....	79	28.4	13	9.2	66	48.2	148	51.9	111	48.3	37	67.0
Cutting.....	62	22.3	34	24.1	28	20.4	120	42.1	101	43.9	19	34.4
Preparing beds.....	60	21.6	36	25.5	24	17.5	134	47.0	111	48.3	23	41.7
Carrying filled sticks.....	59	21.2	39	27.7	20	14.6	123	43.2	91	39.6	32	58.0
Carrying empty sticks.....	41	14.7	17	12.1	24	17.5	47	16.5	39	17.0	8	14.5
Hauling.....	26	9.4	20	14.2	6	4.4	89	31.2	76	33.0	13	23.6
Loading.....	21	7.6	6	4.3	15	10.9	78	27.4	71	30.9	7	12.7
Nonfield:												
Stripping.....	209	75.2	101	71.6	108	78.8	176	61.8	147	63.9	29	52.5
Bulking.....	36	12.9	18	12.8	18	13.1	78	27.4	65	28.3	13	23.6
Housing.....	33	11.9	18	12.8	15	10.9	104	36.5	78	33.9	26	47.1

¹ Some children performed more than one operation.

Table 3 shows the operations in tobacco harvesting performed by children of different ages in Christian and Shelby Counties, Ky.

TABLE 3.—*Operations in tobacco harvesting performed by children of different ages; Christian and Shelby Counties, Ky.*

Operations in tobacco harvesting	Children 7 to 15 years, inclusive										Age not re-ported ²
	Total		Under 10 years		10 years, under 12		12 years, under 14		14 years, under 16		
	Num-ber ¹	Per cent	Num-ber	Per cent	Num-ber	Per cent	Num-ber	Per cent	Num-ber	Per cent	
CHRISTIAN COUNTY, KY.											
Total children-----	278	100.0	60	100.0	77	100.0	73	100.0	54	100.0	14
Hanging tobacco-----	142	51.1	17	28.3	40	51.9	41	56.2	36	66.7	8
Picking up leaves-----	79	28.4	23	38.3	24	31.2	14	19.2	14	25.9	4
Carrying empty sticks-----	41	14.7	13	21.7	11	14.3	8	11.0	7	13.0	2
Carrying filled sticks-----	59	21.2	7	11.7	22	28.6	14	19.2	14	25.9	2
Cutting-----	62	22.3	1	1.7	9	11.7	17	23.3	31	57.4	4
Hauling-----	26	9.4	3	5.0	3	3.9	8	11.0	11	20.4	1
Loading-----	21	7.6	1	1.7	6	7.8	9	12.3	4	7.4	1
SHELBY COUNTY, KY.											
Total children-----	285	100.0	59	100.0	67	100.0	89	100.0	61	100.0	9
Hanging tobacco-----	134	47.0	17	28.8	26	38.8	47	52.8	39	63.9	5
Picking up leaves-----	148	51.9	38	64.4	49	73.1	39	43.8	18	29.5	4
Carrying empty sticks-----	47	16.5	11	18.6	14	20.9	13	14.6	7	11.5	2
Carrying filled sticks-----	123	43.2	23	39.0	28	41.8	41	46.1	27	44.3	4
Cutting-----	120	42.1	11	18.6	19	28.4	46	51.7	40	65.6	4
Hauling-----	89	31.2	6	10.2	11	16.4	34	38.2	37	60.7	1
Loading-----	78	27.4	15	25.4	15	22.4	23	25.8	24	39.3	1

¹ Some children performed more than one operation. ² Per cent not shown where base is less than 50.

OTHER FARM WORK OF CHILDREN

Many boys and a few girls helped in fall or spring plowing, disking, or harrowing, and many worked on corn and other grain crops. More than three-fourths of the children who had plowed had driven two horses or mules; four had used a tractor. About two-fifths of the children had plowed for two weeks or more and nearly one-tenth as long as four weeks. Plowing may become very fatiguing, but disking is more difficult and dangerous, for the worker always rides, driving a number of horses and manipulating the levers which control the disks. One-fourth of the children included in the study who had disked had driven four horses. Only three had used a tractor. Although not many child workers had disked very long, 25 had worked at this for two weeks or more.

In making the ground smooth and ready for planting the children had used spring and spike tooth harrows, homemade "plank drags," and rollers. Workers who ride seated on these machines must endure constant jolting. For those who stand on the machines or walk behind them there is the discomfort of standing or walking all day long. Almost one-half of the children in both counties who had dragged, all except three of whom were boys, had driven three or four horses, only three having used a tractor.

In addition to the field work most of the children had done a variety of odd jobs around the farm, such as helping to build fences, clearing fields of brush, hauling wood and fodder, putting hay in the loft and corn in the silo.

The crops on which children were employed when work on the tobacco crop was not pressing were principally corn, which in Kentucky is first in acreage and value, other grains, and hay. A total of 150 children, practically equal numbers in the two counties, had planted corn by hand, and about the same number had hoed it. Nearly one-half of the children had done some machine cultivating, using the same implements as for tobacco. Many had also picked or gathered corn, breaking the ears from the stalks standing in the field or from stalks after they had been cut and shocked, and throwing the ears into piles. Sometimes they husked as they picked, but often left this part of the work until later. Picking from stalks left standing is done in the latter part of October, but cutting begins about the middle of September. The work which the children do in harvesting corn is mostly done before and after school and on Saturdays. The majority who had cut corn were boys, and nearly two-thirds were at least 12 years old.

About one-fourth of the child workers had done some work on other grains than corn, such as shocking or holding sacks to catch grain during threshing. Some reported using a grain drill or other implement in seeding grain, and a few had operated a binder. The children who had worked on the hay crop reported driving the mower or rake, pitching, loading, or stacking the hay. Some also helped take it to be stacked, riding or driving a horse which dragged a chain fastened around a shock of hay.

Table 4 shows work on other crops done by white and negro children who worked on the tobacco crop in Christian and Shelby Counties, Ky.

TABLE 4.—*Field work on crops other than tobacco performed by white and negro children who were employed on the tobacco crop; Christian and Shelby Counties, Ky.*

Kind of field work	Children 7 to 15 years of age, inclusive											
	Christian County						Shelby County					
	Total		White		Negro		Total		White		Negro	
	Num- ber ¹	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber ¹	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent
Total children.....	278	100.0	141	100.0	137	100.0	285	100.0	230	100.0	55	100.0
General:												
Plowing.....	107	38.5	61	43.3	46	33.6	114	40.0	95	41.3	19	34.5
Disking.....	76	27.3	45	31.9	31	22.6	105	36.8	87	37.8	18	32.7
Harrowing.....	97	34.9	54	38.3	43	31.4	135	47.4	113	49.1	22	40.0
On corn crop:												
Cultivating.....	161	57.9	94	66.7	67	48.9	160	56.1	128	55.7	32	58.2
Picking.....	123	44.2	66	46.8	57	41.6	71	24.9	65	28.3	6	10.9
Planting.....	99	35.6	54	38.3	45	32.8	137	48.1	115	50.0	22	40.0
Cutting.....	56	20.1	33	23.4	23	16.8	98	34.4	73	31.7	25	45.5
Other work.....	74	26.6	36	25.5	38	27.7	225	78.9	183	79.6	42	76.4
On hay crop.....	80	28.8	55	39.0	25	18.2	132	46.3	112	48.7	20	36.4
On grain crop.....	50	18.0	28	19.9	22	16.1	85	29.8	66	28.7	19	34.5

¹ Some children performed more than one kind of field work.

LENGTH OF THE WORKING DAY

The hours which the child workers reported for different kinds of work, such as general farm work, planting, cultivating, and harvesting, were similar and usually long.⁸ Of the 546 children who worked cultivating, 216 reported a working day of 10 hours or more. The 10-hour day was much more common in Christian County, where the tobacco farms were larger, than in Shelby County, though the latter included more older children among its workers. Children who plowed and planted worked the longest hours. Harvesting hours were somewhat shorter because employment on tobacco and corn, the two crops on which most of the children worked, was not rush work; and also because these crops were harvested in the fall when the working day was of necessity shorter. However, of the 96 children under 10 years of age who harvested, 48 had worked at least 8 hours a day. A difference was noted in the length of working day reported by the older children as compared with that of the younger ones.

Two cases will serve to illustrate the long hours which many children worked on typical days. An 11-year-old boy had worked from 5 a. m. until 11 a. m., then from 12 m. to 6.30 p. m., or 12½ hours a day, disking, transplanting, and suckering tobacco. A 12-year-old boy had harrowed for 10 hours on one day, transplanted for 12 hours on another day, and suckered and cultivated as long as 13 hours on a third day.

Table 5 shows the length of a typical working day in cultivating for children of different ages in Christian and Shelby Counties, Ky.

TABLE 5.—*Length of typical working day in cultivating tobacco for children of different ages; Christian and Shelby Counties, Ky.*

Hours cultivating tobacco on a typical day	Children 7 to 15 years of age, inclusive										Age not re- ported ^a
	Total		7 years, under 10		10 years, under 12		12 years, under 14		14 years, under 16		
	Num- ber	Per cent dis- tribu- tion	Num- ber	Per cent dis- tribu- tion	Num- ber	Per cent dis- tribu- tion	Num- ber	Per cent dis- tribu- tion	Num- ber	Per cent dis- tribu- tion	
CHRISTIAN COUNTY, KY.											
Total children.....	272	100.0	59	100.0	76	100.0	71	100.0	52	100.0	14
Less than 8 hours.....	59	21.7	21	35.6	14	18.4	14	19.7	9	17.3	1
8 hours, less than 10.....	78	28.7	18	30.5	29	38.2	16	22.5	12	23.1	3
10 hours and more.....	131	48.2	18	30.5	31	40.8	41	57.7	31	59.6	10
Not reported.....	4	1.5	2	3.4	2	2.6					
SHELBY COUNTY, KY.											
Total children.....	274	100.0	55	100.0	64	100.0	86	100.0	60	100.0	9
Less than 8 hours.....	63	23.0	17	30.9	18	28.1	20	23.3	7	11.7	1
8 hours, less than 10.....	122	44.5	24	43.6	20	31.3	43	50.0	31	51.7	4
10 hours and more.....	85	31.0	13	23.6	25	39.1	23	26.7	21	35.0	3
Not reported.....	4	1.5	1	1.8	1	1.6			1	1.7	1

^a Per cent distribution not shown where base is less than 50.

⁸ The hours worked on the last day prior to the inquiry, provided the hours on that day were said to be the usual ones for the operation reported on, are presented in this report as the hours of work for a "typical" day at the specified operation.

DURATION OF EMPLOYMENT

Since many of the children studied, especially the boys, had worked on other crops as well as tobacco, the total employment of a large number of these child workers extended over a considerable period of time. Some of them began early in the spring when plowing started and continued until the last work on the crops was finished in late fall or early winter. Nearly one-third of the children had worked at least three months, either continuously or an equivalent time intermittently through a longer period. The great majority of these had worked as long as four months, a few for six months, and some even longer. Younger children did not work so long as older ones, but of those under 12 years of age for whom a report was obtained on the length of employment, nearly two-fifths had worked at least two months, and about one-sixth had worked three months or longer.

Two examples may illustrate the duration of the children's work. An 11-year-old boy had plowed one month, disked one week, and harrowed one week. He had transplanted tobacco one week, cultivated with hoe and machine two months, wormed six weeks, and suckered three weeks. At harvest time he had housed tobacco one week and later had stripped it one month. When not busy on tobacco he had planted, cultivated, and harvested corn for a total of more than two months and had helped make hay three days. Another boy 12 years of age had worked on tobacco alone during the entire season. He had transplanted one month, hoed six weeks, topped one week, suckered six weeks, and wormed (probably while suckering) one week. During the harvest he loaded and hauled five weeks.

Girls and boys worked for noticeably different periods of time. More than one-fourth of the boys included in the study had worked four months or more, but no girls had worked so long. This may be attributed to the fact that a smaller proportion of girls than of boys worked on any other crop than tobacco, and they performed fewer of the operations in its culture. Other factors, such as race or tenure of farm, were found to be of little significance. White and negro children, whether of laborers, tenants, or owners, worked about the same periods of time on tobacco and at other farm work. The less prosperous farmers, whether owners or tenants, were the ones whose children were most likely to work and, therefore, to be included in the study.

Table 6 shows the duration of field work in tobacco culture of children of different ages and sex in Christian and Shelby Counties, Ky.

EARNINGS OF CHILD WORKERS

The earnings reported by children for work away from home varied from 10 cents to \$4 per day. Piecework rates were similarly unstandardized. Many children worked on the farms on which their fathers were employed as laborers, and their pay was included in their fathers' wages. Some children were working to repay labor which had been done on their fathers' farms—"swapping work," as they called it. Only a few children who worked at home were paid. In some cases the payment was the profit from a certain acreage of

tobacco or some other crop, or so much for the season's work, or some especial recompense for disagreeable work like worming (as 5 or 10 cents per 100 worms gathered).

TABLE 6.—Duration of field work of children employed in tobacco culture, classified by age; Christian and Shelby Counties, Ky.

Duration of field work	Children 7 to 15 years of age, inclusive						
	Total		7 years, under 10	10 years, under 12	12 years, under 14	14 years, under 16	Age not re-ported
	Number	Per cent distribu-tion					
CHRISTIAN COUNTY, KY.							
Both sexes.....	278	100.0	60	77	73	54	14
Less than 1 month.....	59	21.2	25	12	15	6	1
1 month, less than 2.....	66	23.7	16	25	15	7	3
2 months, less than 3.....	52	18.7	11	15	16	7	3
3 months, less than 4.....	25	9.0	1	5	12	5	2
4 months and more.....	67	24.1	4	17	13	28	5
Duration not reported.....	9	3.2	3	3	2	1	—
Boys.....	186	100.0	37	53	46	38	12
Less than 1 month.....	20	10.8	11	4	4	—	1
1 month, less than 2.....	34	18.3	9	15	6	2	2
2 months, less than 3.....	34	18.3	9	10	10	3	2
3 months, less than 4.....	23	12.4	1	5	11	4	2
4 months and more.....	67	36.0	4	17	13	28	5
Duration not reported.....	8	4.3	3	2	2	1	—
Girls.....	92	100.0	23	24	27	16	2
Less than 1 month.....	39	42.4	14	8	11	6	—
1 month, less than 2.....	32	34.8	7	10	9	5	1
2 months, less than 3.....	18	19.6	2	5	6	4	1
3 months, less than 4.....	2	2.2	—	—	1	1	—
Duration not reported.....	1	1.1	—	1	—	—	—
SHELBY COUNTY, KY.							
Both sexes.....	285	100.0	59	67	89	61	9
Less than 1 month.....	38	13.3	11	11	7	7	2
1 month, less than 2.....	77	27.0	26	25	19	5	2
2 months, less than 3.....	74	26.0	13	17	29	11	4
3 months, less than 4.....	35	12.3	2	3	14	16	—
4 months and more.....	43	15.1	1	7	16	19	—
Duration not reported.....	18	6.3	6	4	4	3	1
Boys.....	228	100.0	51	49	69	52	7
Less than 1 month.....	17	7.5	8	5	3	1	—
1 month, less than 2.....	57	25.0	23	18	9	5	2
2 months, less than 3.....	61	26.8	11	13	24	9	4
3 months, less than 4.....	35	15.4	2	3	14	16	—
4 months and more.....	43	18.9	1	7	16	19	—
Duration not reported.....	15	6.6	6	3	3	2	1
Girls.....	57	100.0	8	18	20	9	2
Less than 1 month.....	21	36.8	3	6	4	6	2
1 month, less than 2.....	20	35.1	3	7	10	—	—
2 months, less than 3.....	13	22.8	2	4	5	2	—
Duration not reported.....	3	5.3	—	1	1	1	—

THE EFFECT OF FARM WORK ON SCHOOLING

Complete school-attendance records for one year (February 1, 1922, to January 31, 1923) were obtained for 409 children. These constituted about two-thirds of the children studied in Christian County and nearly four-fifths of those studied in Shelby County. Nearly one-half the children in the former county for whom records were obtained had attended school less than 80 per cent of the total school session. In Shelby County slightly more than one-half of the children for whom there were school records had attended at least 90 per cent of the term. The better school attendance in Shelby County was doubtless due to its being a more prosperous community with a lower percentage of illiteracy. (See p. 2.) A concerted effort also had been made in this county to bring about better enforcement of the compulsory attendance law, through the action of the county superintendent of schools in authorizing the principals of the five consolidated schools to enforce the law in their respective districts. Christian County had only one attendance officer for the whole county.

Farm work is the chief cause of absence. The number of pupils who had been absent from school on account of illness was greater, but absences due to illness were generally brief. Farm work was given as the cause of absence by 156 children (three-fifths of those reported absent) in Christian County, and by 134 children (more than one-half of those reported absent) in Shelby County. The percentage of boys was much larger than that of girls in each county, as would be expected since the boys had worked for a longer time than had the girls. When the schools opened in July or August, as some did in Christian County, many pupils remained away to sucker and worm tobacco. Later in the fall these same children and others attending schools which opened in September were kept at home for harvesting. Relatively few children lost any time in the spring for farm work, since most of the schools closed before this work began; and proportionately fewer of the young children were absent in either spring or fall. The number of days of absence for farm work varied from 1 to 60. The average absence was 19 days in Christian County and 18 days in Shelby County, or approximately one school month out of the seven months comprising the school term.⁹

As a result of the short school term and much absence, a majority of the Christian County children for whom records were obtained (112, or nearly two-thirds) had attended school less than 100 days during the year preceding the study. In Shelby County a small majority (115, or slightly more than one-half of those for whom records were obtained) had attended school 140 days or more.

Table 7 shows the absence from school on account of farm work of boys and girls in Christian and Shelby Counties, Ky.

⁹ Until 1922 the minimum term (that is, the length of time a school must be taught in order to be entitled to contribution out of the State school fund) had been only six months. See Kentucky, Acts of 1922, ch. 88, pp. 242, 243.

TABLE 7.—*Absence from school on account of farm work of boys and girls employed on the tobacco crop; Christian and Shelby Counties, Ky.*

Absence from school on account of farm work	Children 7 to 15 years of age, inclusive											
	Christian County						Shelby County					
	Total		Boys		Girls		Total		Boys		Girls	
	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution
Total children.....	278	-----	186	-----	92	-----	285	-----	228	-----	57	-----
Reporting on absence.....	252	100.0	166	100.0	86	100.0	253	100.0	205	100.0	48	(1)
No absence for farm work.....	96	38.1	48	28.9	48	55.8	119	47.0	85	41.5	34	-----
Less than 10 days.....	26	10.3	19	11.4	7	8.1	42	16.6	39	19.0	3	-----
10 days, less than 20.....	28	11.1	21	12.7	7	8.1	24	9.5	21	10.2	3	-----
20 days, less than 40.....	21	8.3	17	10.2	4	4.7	20	7.9	17	8.3	3	-----
40 days, less than 60.....	8	3.2	7	4.2	1	1.2	6	2.4	6	2.9	-----	-----
60 days or more.....	3	1.2	3	1.8	-----	-----	4	1.6	4	2.0	-----	-----
Not reporting days.....	70	27.8	51	30.7	19	22.1	38	15.0	33	16.1	5	-----
Not reporting on absence..	26	-----	20	-----	6	-----	32	-----	23	-----	9	-----

¹ Per cent distribution not shown where base is less than 50.

In Christian County 52 per cent of the pupils 8 to 15 years of age were retarded,¹⁰ and of those in Shelby County, 39 per cent, the difference being due to the much larger number of negro children included in the study in Christian County. While such factors as illness, mental retardation, parental indifference, and the failure of the schools to meet the needs of the children must be admitted, the most conspicuous factor preventing normal progress of pupils in the schools was poor attendance. There was a clear relation between retardation and the percentage of absence of the pupils retarded for the year studied, which was probably typical of the entire school life. As the percentage of attendance increased, the percentage of retardation decreased. In Christian County the proportion of retarded children was but little more than one-half as large among children attending school 90 per cent or more of the school term as among those attending less than 70 per cent, and in Shelby County it was considerably less than one-half. The fact that in both counties only about one-third of the white pupils but seven-tenths of the negro pupils were retarded may have been due to the larger proportion of illiterates among the negro fathers; also to the inferiority of the schools provided for negro children as compared with those for white children, and to the greater number of long absences among the negro pupils.

Table 8 shows the school progress of white and negro children who worked on the tobacco crop in Christian and Shelby Counties, Ky.

¹⁰ A child is considered retarded if he is 8 years of age or over on entering the first grade of school, 9 or over on entering the second grade, and so on, according to the grade standard adopted by the United States Bureau of Education.

TABLE 8.—*Progress in school of white and negro children who worked on the tobacco crop in Christian and Shelby Counties, Ky.*

Progress in school	Children 8 to 15 years of age, inclusive											
	Christian County						Shelby County					
	Total		White		Negro		Total		White		Negro	
	Num- ber	Per cent distrib- ution	Num- ber	Per cent distrib- ution	Num- ber	Per cent distrib- ution	Num- ber	Per cent distrib- ution	Num- ber	Per cent distrib- ution	Num- ber	Per cent distrib- ution
Total children.....	266	100.0	132	100.0	134	100.0	273	100.0	220	100.0	53	100.0
Retarded.....	137	51.5	40	30.3	97	72.4	107	39.2	73	33.2	34	64.2
1 year.....	45	16.9	16	12.1	29	21.6	42	15.4	34	15.5	8	15.1
2 years.....	35	13.2	13	9.8	22	16.4	40	14.7	27	12.3	13	24.5
3 years or more.....	57	21.4	11	8.3	46	34.3	25	9.2	12	5.5	13	24.5
Normal.....	89	33.5	65	49.2	24	17.9	131	48.0	119	54.1	12	22.6
Advanced.....	21	7.9	20	15.2	1	.7	24	8.8	21	9.5	3	5.7
Age or grade not reported.....	19	7.1	7	5.3	12	9.0	11	4.0	7	3.2	4	7.5

SOUTH CAROLINA AND VIRGINIA

THE CHILD WORKERS AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT

As was previously stated, the study in South Carolina was made in Florence County and that in Virginia in Halifax County in the Piedmont section of the State. These counties lie within the Bright tobacco belt (so called because of the light yellow color of the tobacco grown there). Florence County is not only a prominent tobacco-growing district but quite a truck-producing district as well, raising especially sweet potatoes and beans, and some cotton and sugar cane. In 10 school districts in Florence County selected for study the total enrollment was 901 children, and 687 of these were interviewed. It was found that 289 of these children and 2 others who were not enrolled in school had worked at least 12 days on the 1922 tobacco crop. In eight school districts selected for study in Halifax County the enrollment was 733 children, and 609 of these were interviewed. It was found that 287 children had worked at least 12 days on the tobacco crop, as had also 28 children who were not enrolled in any school, making a total of 315 for Halifax County. Hence the total number of child workers studied in South Carolina and Virginia was 606.

All were of native white or negro parentage. Although about one-half of the population in each of these two counties was negro, the fathers of only about one-fourth of the children included in the study in each county were negro. The proportion of illiteracy in each county was about one-sixth for the total population 10 years of age and over;¹¹ but one-fourth of the child workers studied in Florence County and one-third of those in Halifax County had fathers who could not read or write.

The fathers of more than one-half of the child workers in Florence County and more than two-fifths of those in Halifax County owned their farms. Most of the remainder were tenants. The average

¹¹ Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Vol. III, Population, pp. 929, 931, 1061, 1066. Washington, 1922.

acreage per farm is 56.6 in Florence County and 84.5 in Halifax County.¹² Among the families represented in the study the average acreage per farm was 65 and 120 for the respective counties. About four-fifths of the farm owners or tenants in Florence County had less than 100 acres, and only 11 (10 of whom were owners) had so much as 200 acres. In Halifax County nearly one-half of them owned or rented 100 acres or more, and about two-fifths of these had as much as 200 acres. In Florence County only about one-fifth of the owners or tenants reporting tobacco acreage and in Halifax County not quite three-fifths had 6 acres or more in tobacco.

All except 13 of the child workers included in the study in the two counties had worked on the home farm. More than two-fifths of those in Florence County who had worked at home had worked away from home as well; the same was true for one-eighth of those in Halifax County, this lower proportion being doubtless attributable to the greater amount of work done by the Virginia children on their fathers' farms, which were larger than the farms of the South Carolina farmers whose children worked. Most of the work done away from home was "swapping." Approximately three-fifths of the child workers studied in the two counties were boys. About three-fourths of the workers were under 14 years of age, more than two-fifths were under 12, and one-fifth were under 10 years of age.

Table 9 shows the age and sex of white and negro children who worked on the tobacco crop in Florence County, S. C., and Halifax County, Va.

TABLE 9.—*Age and sex of white and negro children who worked on the tobacco crop; Florence County, S. C., and Halifax County, Va.*

Age and sex	Children under 16 years of age											
	Florence County, S. C.						Halifax County, Va.					
	Total		White		Negro		Total		White		Negro	
	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution ^a	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution ^a
Total children.....	291	100.0	215	100.0	76	100.0	315	100.0	238	100.0	77	100.0
Under 8 years.....	9	3.1	7	3.3	2	2.6	32	10.2	23	9.7	9	11.7
8 years, under 10.....	38	13.1	33	15.3	5	6.6	48	15.2	33	13.9	15	19.5
10 years, under 12.....	67	23.0	57	26.5	10	13.2	76	24.1	60	25.2	16	20.8
12 years, under 14.....	86	29.6	67	31.2	19	25.0	86	27.3	68	28.6	18	23.4
14 years, under 16.....	54	18.6	43	20.0	11	14.5	65	20.6	50	21.0	15	19.5
Age not reported.....	37	12.7	8	3.7	29	38.2	8	2.5	4	1.7	4	5.2
Boys.....	158	100.0	123	100.0	35	-----	201	100.0	156	100.0	45	-----
Under 8 years.....	6	3.8	5	4.1	1	-----	25	12.4	17	10.9	8	-----
8 years, under 10.....	21	13.3	17	13.8	4	-----	32	15.9	23	14.7	9	-----
10 years, under 12.....	41	25.9	38	30.9	3	-----	44	21.9	37	23.7	7	-----
12 years, under 14.....	42	26.6	35	28.5	7	-----	56	27.9	46	29.5	10	-----
14 years, under 16.....	29	18.4	23	18.7	6	-----	39	19.4	31	19.9	8	-----
Age not reported.....	19	12.0	5	4.1	14	-----	5	2.5	2	1.3	3	-----
Girls.....	133	100.0	92	100.0	41	-----	114	100.0	82	100.0	32	-----
Under 8 years.....	3	2.3	2	2.2	1	-----	7	6.1	6	7.3	1	-----
8 years, under 10.....	17	12.8	16	17.4	1	-----	16	14.0	10	12.2	6	-----
10 years, under 12.....	26	19.5	19	20.7	7	-----	32	28.1	23	28.0	9	-----
12 years, under 14.....	44	33.1	32	34.8	12	-----	30	26.3	22	26.8	8	-----
14 years, under 16.....	25	18.8	20	21.7	5	-----	26	22.8	19	23.2	7	-----
Age not reported.....	18	13.5	3	3.3	15	-----	3	2.6	2	2.4	1	-----

^a Per cent distribution not shown where base is less than 50.

¹³ *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, Agriculture, pt. 2, pp. 155, 278. Washington, 1922.

THE WORK OF CHILDREN IN TOBACCO CULTURE

The culture of tobacco is in general the same in the South Carolina and Virginia districts studied as in those in Kentucky. The only noticeable difference in work in the fields is the method of harvesting in South Carolina, where the workers pick the leaves one by one from the stalk, instead of cutting the whole plant. Many boys help in the picking and then haul the leaves from the field to the barn where other workers, mostly women and girls, string the leaves upon laths. The younger children, including some boys too young to help at other work, hand tobacco leaves to the workers who string them.

Work before harvesting.

Much of the work preliminary to the harvesting of tobacco in which the children took part was similar to that of the child workers in Kentucky. Thus, 165 children (about one-half in each county) had helped to make the seedbeds, and 273 (also about one-half in each county) had helped weed the tobacco beds. A large proportion of the children in both counties had transplanted, mostly by hand. Nearly one-half of the Florence County children and one-fourth of those in Halifax County had performed all three operations involved in transplanting—drawing, dropping, and setting. (Pl. I, Figs. 1, 2, 4, facing p. 18.) Many, however, had only dropped the plants, division of labor being evidently more practicable in Halifax County especially, possibly because of the larger acreages worked there. More than one-fifth of the children who had transplanted in both counties were under 10 years of age.

Almost all the children who reported cultivating tobacco had done hoeing, but about one-fourth of the children in both counties who had cultivated had used a machine, such as a one-horse turn or sweep plow. About one-sixth of the child workers who had cultivated were under 10 years of age. Topping had been done by 246 children. Nearly all who had done any work on the tobacco crop had done some worming and suckering, the majority (proportionately many more in Halifax County, where tobacco acreages were larger than in Florence County) having worked at these tasks more than one week.

Harvesting.

Although the actual cutting of tobacco stalks was generally done by adult workers in Halifax County, this work was reported by 66 child workers, mostly the older boys. Children also carried empty sticks, distributing them through the field, and carried filled sticks to the wagons. Loaded sticks had been put upon the wagon by 71 children (mostly boys), and hauling to the barn was reported by 36 boys. A few children had also helped to hang the tobacco stalks upon the sticks in the field.

Since in South Carolina the harvesting is done by picking the individual leaves from the stalks, which is not heavy work, about one-half of the boys and one-fifth of the girls studied in Florence County had harvested. Harvesting begins about the middle of July and lasts a month. For the first picking or "cropping," as the local expression is, the child workers sit or kneel on the ground (Pl. II, facing p. 19) as the lower leaves usually mature first. Working along

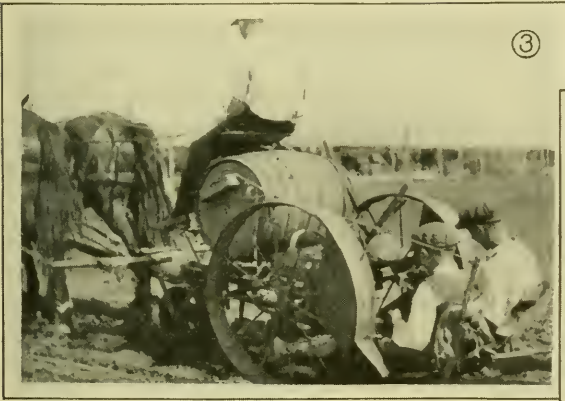


PLATE I.—OPERATIONS ON THE TOBACCO CROP: 1. DRAWING PLANTS FROM THE BED (FLORENCE COUNTY, S. C.). 2. SETTING PLANTS (FLORENCE COUNTY). 3. SETTING PLANTS BY MACHINE (MASSACHUSETTS). 4. SETTING PLANTS (FLORENCE COUNTY). 5. HANDING PLANTS TO THE SPEARER (CONNECTICUT VALLEY). 6. CARRYING LEAVES TIED IN BUNDLES TO THE PACKER (CONNECTICUT VALLEY)



PLATE II.—PICKING SHADE GROWN TOBACCO IN THE CONNECTICUT VALLEY:
1. FIRST PICKING. 2. SECOND PICKING. 3. THIRD PICKING. 4. FOURTH
PICKING

two rows at the same time, they break off those leaves which are of about the proper stage of maturity and lay them in neat piles upon the ground. Later they gather the piles and put them into baskets or directly into the trucks in which they are to be carried to the barn. For later pickings of leaves higher on the stalks the children can stand up. In order to get the leaves at their best it is necessary to go over the field three or four times at intervals of about a week. The majority of the 108 children who had picked in Florence County were boys, and one-third of these were under 12 years of age. The one-horse trucks in which tobacco is taken to the curing barns had been driven by 110 children, 11 of whom were girls.

Barn work.

In South Carolina the tobacco leaves must be strung in bunches on the laths preparatory to curing, and this task, known as stringing, had been performed by 78 children in Florence County, 55 of whom were girls. The children who are too young to string put leaves in bunches to hand to the stringers, 181 (about an equal number of boys and girls) having done this. Sometimes two children are kept busy handing leaves to one stringer. Of those who did the stringing, 70 per cent were 12 years of age or over. The process consists of attaching a string to one end of the lath, and alternately winding this string around a bunch of leaves and across the upper surface of the lath until the lath has been filled with bunches of leaves hanging alternately on either side of it. The end of the string is then made secure so that no leaves can fall off.

Housing of the tobacco, or hanging the filled laths in tiers in the barn and taking them down after the curing has been completed, was reported by about one-fourth of the child workers in Florence County and four-fifths of those in Halifax County.

Fire tending.

In the South Atlantic States most of the tobacco is "flue cured" by heated air circulated through the curing barn by means of flues. The furnaces which heat the air require practically constant attention during the entire four or more days of the curing in order that the required degree of heat be maintained. Children often relieve their parents at this task; and 128 child workers (two-thirds of whom were 12 years of age or older, and all except 16 of whom were boys) had helped tend the fires. Very often the children remained at the barns until late at night, and sometimes they stayed all night. For example, a 14-year-old boy and his brother had kept the fires night and day for one week, taking turns sleeping and watching. A 10-year-old girl had helped tend the fires during the time in which six curings were made, sleeping at the barn practically a month. A 13-year-old boy stayed up until midnight every night for one month watching fires during the curing process.

Miscellaneous work.

Since in South Carolina and Virginia the tobacco-curing barns are not large enough to hold a whole season's crop they must be used several times within one season. Therefore, the tobacco is removed to a storage house as soon as it can be handled. Helping to take the tobacco down and to bulk it was reported by 129 children. In

South Carolina, where tobacco is harvested by picking, so that it does not have to be stripped, bulking is the last work before grading and tying in which the child workers assist. In Virginia, to get the tobacco "in order" or in proper condition for stripping, it is hung in an underground pit on tiers like those in the barn. As the tiers in the pit are not so high as those in the barn, the strain of reaching is not so great; but each stick loaded with tobacco weighs about 5 pounds.¹³ In Halifax County, 98 of the child workers had helped pit tobacco, 55 had stripped and graded it, and 169 had tied leaves which had been graded by others. Children in South Carolina sort the leaves according to size and quality and tie them in "hands." Tying leaves which they themselves or others had sorted or graded was reported by 122 of the children in Florence County. Tying does not require the skill needed in grading; about one-tenth of the children who did this work were under 10 years of age, and about two-fifths were under 12. Many of the children who had tied had done the work as long as two weeks; and more than one-third had tied for as long as four weeks. In South Carolina much of the tying can be done before school opens.

Table 10 shows the operations in tobacco culture performed by white and negro children in Florence County, S. C., and in Halifax County, Va.

TABLE 10.—*Operations in tobacco culture performed by white and negro children; Florence County, S. C., and Halifax County, Va.*

Operations in tobacco culture	Children under 16 years of age											
	Florence County, S. C.						Halifax County, Va.					
	Total		White		Negro		Total		White		Negro	
	Num- ber ¹	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber ¹	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent
Total children.....	291	100.0	215	100.0	76	100.0	315	100.0	238	100.0	77	100.0
Field:												
Transplanting.....	281	96.6	206	95.8	75	98.7	311	98.7	236	99.2	75	97.4
Suckering.....	279	95.9	208	96.7	71	93.4	312	99.0	235	98.7	77	100.0
Worming.....	259	89.0	193	89.8	66	86.8	305	96.8	228	95.8	77	100.0
Cultivating.....	223	76.6	161	74.9	62	81.6	232	73.7	170	71.4	62	80.5
Topping.....	171	58.8	118	54.9	53	69.7	75	23.8	63	26.5	12	15.6
Weeding.....	139	47.8	98	45.6	41	53.9	134	42.5	81	34.0	53	68.8
Hauling.....	110	37.8	84	39.1	26	34.2	36	11.4	23	9.7	13	16.9
Picking.....	108	37.1	70	32.6	38	50.0						
Cutting.....							66	21.0	40	16.8	26	33.8
Preparing beds.....	82	28.2	60	27.9	22	28.9	83	26.3	60	25.2	23	29.9
Loading.....	7	2.4	5	2.3	2	2.6	71	22.5	57	23.9	14	18.2
Nonfield:												
Stripping.....							55	17.5	43	18.1	12	15.6
Bulking.....	66	22.7	46	21.4	20	26.3	63	20.0	48	20.2	15	19.5
Housing.....	75	25.8	55	25.6	20	26.3	250	79.4	184	77.3	66	85.7

¹ Some children performed more than one operation.

Table 11 shows the operations in tobacco harvesting performed by children of different ages in Florence County, S. C., and Halifax County, Va.

¹ Weight reported by the United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Plant Industry.

TABLE 11.—*Operations in tobacco harvesting performed by children of different ages; Florence County, S. C., and Halifax County, Va.*

Operations in tobacco harvesting	Children under 16 years of age										Age not reported
	Total		Under 10 years		10 years, under 12		12 years, under 14		14 years, under 16		
	Number ¹	Per cent	Number	Per cent ²	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	
FLORENCE COUNTY, S. C.											
Total children-----	291	100.0	47	-----	67	100.0	86	100.0	54	100.0	37
Driving truck-----	100	37.8	18	-----	34	50.7	29	33.7	16	29.6	13
Picking-----	108	37.1	11	-----	23	34.3	26	30.2	31	57.4	17
Stringing-----	78	26.8	5	-----	17	25.4	27	31.4	21	38.9	8
HALIFAX COUNTY, VA.											
Total children-----	315	100.0	80	100.0	76	100.0	86	100.0	65	100.0	8
Carrying sticks-----	164	52.1	62	77.5	43	56.6	41	47.7	14	21.5	4
Loading-----	71	22.5	15	18.8	13	17.1	26	30.2	15	23.1	2
Hauling-----	36	11.4	4	5.0	2	2.6	15	17.4	13	20.0	2
Cutting-----	66	21.0	2	2.5	10	13.2	21	24.4	32	49.2	1

¹ Some children performed more than one operation. ² Per cent not shown where base is less than 50.

OTHER FARM WORK OF CHILDREN

Many children did general farm work and worked on other crops when no help was needed on tobacco. They made hay, helped plant, cultivate, and harvest corn and other grains; and in Florence County many worked on cotton, and some on sweet potatoes, peanuts, peas, beans, rice, and sugar cane. On account of the loose, friable nature of the soil in this county less work is required in preparation of the land for planting than in other districts where the study was made, and much of the general farm work is done with simple one-horse machines. Plowing had been done by an unusually large proportion of children—110 (including eight girls), or about two-fifths of the workers. About one-fourth of them had worked for four weeks or more. A few children had disked and dragged, although not much of this type of work was done. In Halifax County 91 boys had plowed, nearly one-third working at least four weeks. Harrowing was reported by 99 boys, over one-third of whom had done it for at least a week. More than one-half the children (a larger proportion in Florence County than in Halifax County) had planted corn by hand or by machine. Cotton, which is grown extensively in Florence County and to a very limited extent in Halifax County, is planted shortly after corn, but very few children had done cotton planting. They set out tobacco after the corn planting is finished and soon afterwards begin "chopping cotton" with a hoe. Nearly one-half of the child workers in Florence County had chopped cotton. About one-half of the children in both counties had cultivated corn by hand or machine or in both ways. More than three-fourths in Florence County had helped in the cotton picking, which is done after the tobacco crop has been harvested and continues while there is any cotton left to pick, sometimes even until Christmas. More than one-half of the children in Florence County and not quite one-fifth of those in Halifax County had picked corn, generally husking as they picked.

Table 12 shows the kind of field work done on crops other than tobacco by white and negro children who worked on the tobacco crop in Florence County, S. C., and Halifax County, Va.

TABLE 12.—*Field work on crops other than tobacco, performed by white and negro children who were employed on the tobacco crop; Florence County, S. C., and Halifax County, Va.*

Kind of field work	Children under 16 years of age											
	Florence County, S. C.						Halifax County, Va.					
	Total		White		Negro		Total		White		Negro	
	Number ¹	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number ¹	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Total children..	291	100.0	215	100.0	76	100.0	315	100.0	238	100.0	77	100.0
General:												
Plowing.....	110	37.8	78	36.3	32	42.1	91	28.9	65	27.3	26	33.8
Disking.....	31	10.7	28	13.0	3	3.9	16	5.1	12	5.0	4	5.2
Harrowing.....	41	14.1	28	13.0	13	17.1	99	31.4	74	31.1	25	32.5
On corn crop:												
Planting.....	189	64.9	130	60.5	59	77.6	122	38.7	92	38.7	30	39.0
Cultivating.....	161	55.3	108	50.2	53	69.7	145	46.0	109	45.8	36	46.8
Picking.....	151	51.9	102	47.4	49	64.5	61	19.4	55	23.1	6	7.8
Stripping fodder.....	155	53.3	111	51.6	44	57.9	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Cutting corn.....	35	12.0	23	10.7	12	15.8	162	51.4	112	47.1	50	64.9
Other work.....	111	38.1	79	36.7	32	42.1	212	67.3	152	63.9	60	77.9
On hay crop.....	126	43.3	96	44.7	30	39.5	51	16.2	41	17.2	10	13.0
On grain crop.....	54	18.6	37	17.2	17	22.4	110	34.9	87	36.6	23	29.9
On cotton:												
Picking.....	228	78.4	158	73.5	70	92.1	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Chopping.....	134	46.0	95	44.2	39	51.3	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

¹ Some children did more than one kind of field work.

LENGTH OF THE WORKING DAY

The hours which the child workers reported for different kinds of work were generally long. A large majority in both counties had worked 8 hours a day or longer, whether on tobacco, corn, or general farm work.¹⁴ As large a proportion of the younger as of the older children had worked these long hours. A number in Florence County and a much larger number proportionately in Halifax County, where farms were larger, had worked 10 hours a day or longer. For example, of the 261 children in Florence County who had cultivated, 193 had worked 8 hours or longer and 80 had worked 10 hours or longer; of the 242 children in Halifax County who had cultivated, 216 had worked at least 8 hours and 162 at least 10 hours. The following illustrations of long hours of work may be given: An 11-year-old boy in Florence County had plowed and had transplanted tobacco 10 hours a day and had hoed tobacco and harvested corn 11 hours a day. A 12-year-old girl had worked 11 hours a day transplanting and hoeing tobacco and picking cotton. An 11-year-old boy in Halifax County had transplanted and hoed tobacco 11½ hours a day and helped on tobacco at harvest time 10½ hours a day.

Table 13 shows the length of a typical working day in cultivating for children of different ages in Florence County, S. C., and Halifax County, Va.

¹⁴ For definition of typical working day see footnote 8, p. 11

TABLE 13.—Length of typical working day in cultivating tobacco for children of different ages; Florence County, S. C., and Halifax County, Va.

Hours cultivating tobacco on a typical day	Children under 16 years of age									
	Total		Un- der 10 years ¹	10 years, under 12		12 years, under 14		14 years, under 16		Age not re- ported ¹
	Num- ber	Per cent distrib- ution		Num- ber	Per cent distrib- ution	Num- ber	Per cent distrib- ution	Num- ber	Per cent distrib- ution	
FLORENCE COUNTY, S. C.										
Total children ²	261	100.0	35	62	100.0	78	100.0	51	100.0	² 35
Less than 8 hours.....	67	25.7	13	22	35.5	19	24.4	11	21.6	2
8 hours, less than 10.....	113	43.3	14	25	40.3	34	43.6	21	41.2	19
10 hours and more.....	80	30.7	8	15	24.2	25	32.1	19	37.3	13
HALIFAX COUNTY, VA.										
Total children ²	242	100.0	44	59	100.0	74	100.0	59	100.0	² 6
Less than 8 hours.....	25	10.3	8	9	15.3	5	6.8	2	3.4	1
8 hours, less than 10.....	54	22.3	10	13	22.0	18	24.3	12	20.3	1
10 hours and more.....	162	66.9	26	37	62.7	51	68.9	45	76.3	3

¹ Per cent distribution not shown where base is less than 50.² Includes 1 child for whom no report on hours was obtained.

DURATION OF EMPLOYMENT

More than one-third of the children in each county had worked at least three months continuously, or an equivalent of this time intermittently, throughout the year. A much larger proportion of boys than of girls worked three months or longer, since boys helped in more operations on the tobacco crop than did girls, also on a greater number of crops and general farm tasks, especially in Florence County. Negro children worked longer than white children. Only 68 children in the two counties had worked less than a month, and many children had worked four months or even longer. The younger children worked shorter periods than older children, and also more intermittently. For instance, some dropped tobacco plants in April, then did no other farm work until they helped to worm and sucker tobacco plants in June and July.

The following accounts illustrate the duration of employment: A 10-year-old girl and a 15-year-old girl in a tenant family which worked 10 acres of tobacco in Halifax County had worked on the corn crop, planting, thinning, cultivating, and harvesting, for more than one month, on tobacco transplanting one week, cultivating about as long, and suckering and worming two months. The younger girl had held sticks during harvest time for two weeks while the older one cut tobacco. Both had housed tobacco and taken it down from the barn during part of this time. After the field work was done they had stripped tobacco for three months, working after school and often in the evening by lantern light. A 12-year-old boy in this family had done as much work on corn and tobacco as had his sisters, and in addition he had plowed for seven weeks.

Four sisters aged 9, 11, 12, and 15, whose father owned his farm, had worked on tobacco in the field and at the barn. The three older

ones had worked on corn, peas, and sugar cane when they were not busy on the tobacco. For a few days they had helped make plant beds and weed them. They had transplanted for two weeks, the three older girls drawing and setting the plants, while the youngest one worked only at dropping them. All four girls hoed for four weeks, and all wormed and suckered for one month. Only the two older sisters had topped. They also had cut tobacco for two weeks during the harvest time, while the two younger girls carried sticks and held them. All four girls helped for two weeks in putting tobacco in the barn and had helped take it down when the curing was completed. The oldest girl had stripped while the other three tied for two months, much of this being done after school and on Saturdays. Some help was given on this farm by a cousin of these girls, who, according to the school record, was only 7 years of age. On the day when the agent of the Children's Bureau visited the farm the 7-year-old boy was driving a one-horse "daggar" plow preparing land for planting. He had started to work that morning at 6 o'clock. This was his first year of plowing, but during the previous year he had worked on tobacco.

Table 14 shows the duration of field work of children, classified by age and sex, in Florence County, S. C., and Halifax County, Va.

TABLE 14.—Duration of field work of children employed in tobacco culture, classified by age and sex; Florence County, S. C., and Halifax County, Va.

Duration of field work	Children under 16 years of age						
	Total		7 years, under 10	10 years, under 12	12 years, under 14	14 years, under 16	Age not reported
	Number	Per cent distribution					
FLORENCE COUNTY, S. C.							
Both sexes.....	291	100.0	47	67	86	54	37
Less than 1 month.....	22	7.6	6	4	6	5	1
1 month, less than 2.....	81	27.8	19	16	24	12	10
2 months, less than 3.....	65	22.3	12	17	18	13	5
3 months, less than 4.....	36	12.4	2	10	15	4	5
4 months and more.....	62	21.3	3	14	17	19	9
Duration not reported.....	25	8.6	5	6	6	1	7
Boys.....	158	100.0	27	41	42	29	19
Less than 1 month.....	4	2.5	2	1	—	—	1
1 month, less than 2.....	33	20.9	10	8	7	3	5
2 months, less than 3.....	38	24.1	5	13	10	8	2
3 months, less than 4.....	24	15.2	2	6	9	3	4
4 months and more.....	43	27.2	3	8	12	14	6
Duration not reported.....	16	10.1	5	5	4	1	1
Girls.....	133	100.0	20	26	44	25	18
Less than 1 month.....	18	13.5	4	3	6	5	—
1 month, less than 2.....	48	36.1	9	8	17	9	5
2 months, less than 3.....	27	20.3	7	4	8	5	3
3 months, less than 4.....	12	9.0	—	4	6	1	1
4 months and more.....	19	14.3	—	6	5	5	3
Duration not reported.....	9	6.8	—	1	2	—	6

TABLE 14.—*Duration of field work of children employed in tobacco culture, classified by age and sex; Florence County, S. C., and Halifax County, Va.—Continued*

Duration of field work	Children under 16 years of age						
	Total		7 years, under 10	10 years, under 12	12 years, under 14	14 years, under 16	Age not reported
	Number	Per cent distribution					
HALIFAX COUNTY, VA.							
Both sexes.....	315	100.0	80	76	86	65	8
Less than 1 month.....	46	14.6	16	8	13	7	2
1 month, less than 2.....	76	24.1	34	21	13	8	-----
2 months, less than 3.....	71	22.5	20	18	19	14	-----
3 months, less than 4.....	45	14.3	4	17	15	9	-----
4 months and more.....	62	19.7	5	10	21	25	1
Duration not reported.....	15	4.8	1	2	5	2	5
Boys.....	201	100.0	57	44	56	39	5
Less than 1 month.....	12	6.0	8	-----	4	-----	-----
1 month, less than 2.....	39	19.4	24	8	6	1	-----
2 months, less than 3.....	50	24.9	16	13	11	10	-----
3 months, less than 4.....	34	16.9	3	14	12	5	-----
4 months and more.....	53	26.4	5	8	18	21	1
Duration not reported.....	13	6.5	1	1	5	2	4
Girls.....	114	100.0	23	32	30	26	3
Less than 1 month.....	34	29.8	8	8	9	7	2
1 month, less than 2.....	37	32.5	10	13	7	7	-----
2 months, less than 3.....	21	18.4	4	5	8	4	-----
3 months, less than 4.....	11	9.6	1	3	3	4	-----
4 months and more.....	9	7.9	-----	2	3	4	-----
Duration not reported.....	2	1.8	-----	1	-----	-----	1

EARNINGS OF CHILD WORKERS

The earnings reported by children for work away from home varied from 15 cents to \$1.25 a day in Florence County and from 15 cents to \$1.50 a day in Halifax County. The majority in Florence County received 50 cents a day, but in Halifax County one-half of the child workers receiving pay earned \$1 or more a day. Some in both counties had done work in exchange for work done on their fathers' farms. Payment for work on the home farm was infrequent, but some children (mostly in Halifax County, where a larger proportion of the fathers were farm owners) had received the profit from a certain acreage of some crop, usually tobacco.

THE EFFECT OF FARM WORK ON SCHOOLING

In Florence County attendance records for the whole school year preceding the study were obtainable for only 173 of the 291 children included in the study. About one-half of these 173 child workers—a far larger proportion of negro than of white children—had attended school less than 90 per cent of the term. School attendance in South Carolina was compulsory for only four months, or 80 days, for all children between 8 and 14 years of age, and various exemptions were permitted.¹⁵ Because of lack of funds an attendance officer had been employed only a part of the year covered by the school records.

¹⁵ South Carolina, Acts of 1921, No. 430, p. 754, secs. 1-15.

The majority of the children for whom records were obtainable (55 per cent) had attended school less than 120 days, and 23 children, or 13 per cent, had attended less than 80 days.

Farm work was the chief cause of absence. Of 237 children for whom attendance records were obtained, 138 (nearly 60 per cent) had missed some time for farm work. Although the absence varied from only a few days to 60 days (12 school weeks), the average number of days missed for farm work was 18. A larger proportion of boys than of girls had missed school for farm work, and a larger proportion of negro than of white children.

The shortness of the school term, the brief duration of the compulsory period, and the long absences would be expected to result in retardation for many of the children. One-half of the children 8 to 15 years of age included in the study were found to be retarded (see footnote 10, p. 15), and 36 per cent of these were retarded three years or more. Of the 45 negro children of these ages for whom a report on age and grade could be obtained, 40 were retarded, 27 of these being retarded three years or more. The negro schools had a shorter term than that of the white schools, and the attendance law was practically disregarded so far as negroes were concerned.

No school records were obtainable for 72 of the children studied in Halifax County, and, as was previously stated (p. 16), 28 others had not attended school at all during the year preceding the study. Nearly two-fifths (79) of the 215 children for whom records could be obtained had attended school less than 80 per cent of the term, and nearly three-fifths had attended less than 90 per cent. Children between 8 and 14 years of age, with certain exemptions, must attend some school for the time the public school is in session in the respective districts in which they reside, but a city or county, through the action of local authorities, may be exempted from the operation of the law, which may thus be made inoperative if the influential members of the community so desire.¹⁶

Farm work was the reason for absence of 145 of the 215 pupils whose records were found, and 13 boys had missed 40 days or more on this account. The average absence for this reason was 16 days. A larger percentage of boys than of girls reported farm work as a cause of absence, and a larger percentage of negroes than of white children.

Among the children who had not been in school at all were 13 within the compulsory school age. One group of such nonattendants was part of the family of a negro tenant who had 13 children at home, 9 of them under 16 years of age. Only one of these 9 (4 of whom were of compulsory school age) had ever been in school, and she had not attended at all during the year preceding the study. The father remarked, "Had so many children, couldn't send them all"; so that in this case parental ignorance and illiteracy as well as the necessity of doing farm work were at the foundation of the absence of the children from school.

¹⁶ Virginia, Acts of 1922, ch. 381, p. 641. This law is a great improvement over the one which it replaced, but it had just been passed at the time of the study and two years had been allowed to prepare for its enforcement, with the privilege of having that time extended on permission of the local tax authorities.

Although seven months is the legal minimum term,¹⁷ some of the schools in Halifax County had shorter terms for the year 1922-23, chiefly because of the lack of sufficient funds. In some of the school districts the parents subscribed money in order to keep the schools open longer than would have been possible with public funds alone.

The shortness of the term in some districts and the failure to enforce the compulsory attendance law doubtless account in part for the fact that the great majority (67 per cent) of the children for whom records were obtained had attended school less than 120 days, that more than one-third had attended less than 100 days, and that 40 children or nearly one-fifth, had attended less than 80 days.

Table 15 shows the absence from school on account of farm work of boys and girls in Florence County, S. C., and Halifax County, Va.

TABLE 15.—*Absence from school on account of farm work of boys and girls employed on the tobacco crop; Florence County, S. C., and Halifax County, Va.*

Absence from school on account of farm work	Children under 16 years of age											
	Florence County, S. C.						Halifax County, Va.					
	Total		Boys		Girls		Total		Boys		Girls	
	Num- ber	Per cent distrib- ution	Num- ber	Per cent distrib- ution	Num- ber	Per cent distrib- ution	Num- ber	Per cent distrib- ution	Num- ber	Per cent distrib- ution	Num- ber	Per cent distrib- ution
Total children.....	291		158		133		315		201		114	
Reporting on absence.....	237	100.0	129	100.0	108	100.0	248	100.0	160	100.0	88	100.0
No absence for farm work.....	99	41.8	42	32.6	57	52.8	103	41.5	49	30.6	54	61.4
Less than 10 days.....	37	15.6	17	13.2	20	18.5	54	21.8	37	23.1	17	19.3
10 days, less than 20.....	19	8.0	13	10.1	6	5.6	23	9.3	16	10.0	7	8.0
20 days, less than 40.....	11	4.6	10	7.8	1	.9	11	4.4	10	6.3	1	1.1
40 days, less than 60.....	6	2.5	3	2.3	3	2.8	8	3.2	8	5.0		
60 days or more.....	4	1.7	4	3.1			5	2.0	5	3.1		
Not reporting days.....	61	25.7	40	31.0	21	19.4	44	17.7	35	21.9	9	10.2
Not reporting on absence....	54		29		25		67		41		26	

Of the Halifax County children 8 to 15 years of age, inclusive, who were studied, one-half were retarded—45 per cent of the white children and 68 per cent of the negro children of these ages. Nearly one-fourth of the retarded white children and nearly one-half of the retarded negro children were retarded three years or more.

Table 16 shows the progress in school of white and negro children who worked on the tobacco crop in Florence County, S. C., and Halifax County, Va.

¹⁷ The law fixed no absolute minimum term, but provided that in order to share in the State funds the schools of a county or district must have been kept in operation on an average of at least seven months, or 20 days longer than the previous year, or a less period satisfactory to the State board of education. It also provided, however, that no county should be denied participation in the State funds when it had levied the maximum school tax allowed by law. See Virginia, Acts of 1920, ch. 82.

TABLE 16.—*Progress in school of white and negro children who worked on the tobacco crop; Florence County, S. C., and Halifax County, Va.*

Progress in school	Children 8 to 15 years of age, inclusive											
	Florence County, S. C.						Halifax County, Va.					
	Total		White		Negro		Total		White		Negro	
	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution
Total children-----	282	100.0	208	100.0	74	100.0	283	100.0	215	100.0	68	100.0
Retarded-----	142	50.4	102	49.0	40	54.1	142	50.2	96	44.7	46	67.6
1 year-----	54	19.1	45	21.6	9	12.2	55	19.4	43	20.0	12	17.6
2 years-----	30	10.6	26	12.5	4	5.4	43	15.2	30	14.0	13	19.1
3 years or more-----	58	20.6	31	14.9	27	36.5	44	15.5	23	10.7	21	30.9
Normal-----	91	32.3	86	41.3	5	6.8	99	35.0	86	40.0	13	19.1
Advanced-----	12	4.3	12	5.8			8	2.8	7	3.3	1	1.5
Age or grade not reported-----	37	13.1	8	3.8	29	39.2	34	12.0	26	12.1	8	11.8

THE CONNECTICUT VALLEY

THE CHILD WORKERS AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT

Tobacco growing in Massachusetts and Connecticut is a large commercial enterprise, and many of the tobacco farms, though managed by a local person, are owned by corporations, as has been stated (p. 1). Hence the labor on these farms is composed of workers resident on the farm during the entire year, migratory workers—a large proportion of whom are men recruited from neighboring cities for seasonal work—and day workers from cities and rural districts, including many children. City children as a rule work only in the harvest season, either in the fields or in the sheds where the tobacco is prepared for curing. In the field they are supervised by foremen who work under the direction of the manager. The foremen see to it that the children pick with care and do not waste time. Foremen or forewomen also supervise the work done by children in the sheds.

Since about three-fourths of the acreage of tobacco in the whole of New England is in Connecticut, chiefly in the vicinity of the city of Hartford, it is not difficult to obtain workers. Although on smaller farms the owners' families can usually do the work, they too hire local labor if rushed in busy seasons. Massachusetts raises some tobacco on territory contiguous to the Connecticut area, and some along the Connecticut River in the district extending from Northampton north to Greenfield.

In Connecticut the enrollment of six schools in the rural districts of Hartford County with a total of 485 pupils and of three schools in the city of Hartford with an enrollment of over 6,000 pupils was used as a basis of the study. Of the children in the rural schools, 267 (or nearly three-fifths of those whom it was possible to interview), and in the city schools 534 children (or nearly one-tenth of those enrolled), had worked at least 12 days on the tobacco crop, making a

total of 801 children for the study in this State. In Massachusetts three rural schools in Hampshire County with an enrollment of 470 pupils were selected, and of these, 175 children (or two-fifths of those interviewed) had worked on the tobacco crop at least 12 days. In addition 5 children of 14 or 15 years of age, the older brothers or sisters of enrolled pupils, who had left school for regular work, were included in the study, making a total of 180 rural children. There were also 128 pupils (about 4 per cent of the enrollment) in five schools of Springfield, Mass., who had worked on the tobacco crop not less than 12 days and who were included in the study, making a total of 308 children in this State and a total of 1,109 studied in the selected districts of the two States. A large proportion of the fathers of the children were of foreign birth. (Table 17.) The illiteracy among the native fathers was negligible, but practically one-third of the foreign-born fathers could neither read nor write.

TABLE 17.—*Race and nationality of the fathers of children who worked on the tobacco crop in the Connecticut Valley*

Race and nationality of father	Children under 16 years of age											
	Connecticut						Massachusetts					
	Total		City (Hartford)		Rural (Hartford County)		Total		City (Springfield)		Rural (Hampshire County)	
	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution
Total children.....	801	100.0	534	100.0	267	100.0	308	100.0	128	100.0	180	100.0
White.....	724	90.4	463	86.7	261	97.8	300	97.4	120	93.8	180	100.0
Native.....	152	19.0	36	6.7	116	43.4	68	22.1	15	11.7	53	29.4
Foreign born.....	566	70.7	425	79.6	141	52.8	230	74.7	104	81.3	126	70.0
Polish.....	129	16.1	88	16.5	41	15.4	104	33.8	8	6.3	96	53.3
Italian.....	237	29.6	232	43.4	5	1.9	73	23.7	73	57.0	-----	-----
All other.....	191	23.8	103	19.3	88	33.0	49	15.9	22	17.2	27	15.0
Not reported.....	9	1.1	2	.4	7	2.6	4	1.3	1	.8	3	1.7
Nativity not reported..	6	.7	2	.4	4	1.5	2	.6	1	.8	1	.6
Negro.....	77	9.6	71	13.3	6	2.2	8	2.6	8	6.3	-----	-----

Of the 1,109 children included in the study in this region, 979 (706 in Connecticut and 273 in Massachusetts) stated that they were being supported by their fathers. Others were supported by their mothers, older brothers or sisters, or other relatives. The majority of the fathers of the rural children were farm owners, and nearly all the rest were farm laborers or were engaged in nonagricultural work, as there are few farm tenants in New England. The farms were small, the majority less than 50 acres. In the two States about one-half the farmers whose children were studied worked less than 15 acres of tobacco. The fathers who were not farmers were engaged in various occupations; about two-thirds of them in some manufacturing or mechanical pursuit, in factories as laborers, skilled or semiskilled operatives, or as contractors or mechanics in the building trades. Among the remaining third were proprietors of stores,

commercial travelers and salesmen, real-estate or insurance agents, truck drivers, chauffeurs, and railroad laborers.

All except two of the children from the cities were reported as having worked for other employers than their own fathers. Some rural children worked only at home, some only away from home, some both at home and elsewhere.

More than two-thirds of the 801 child workers studied in Connecticut were boys, a larger proportion of those from the city of Hartford than of those from the rural districts. Nearly three-fifths of the 308 child workers studied in Massachusetts also were boys, approximately the same proportion for rural as for city children. In Connecticut a much larger proportion of rural child workers (89 per cent) than of city child workers (78 per cent) were under 14 years of age, as would be expected from the fact that the city children were hired hands, working some distance from their homes. In Massachusetts also more rural children (71 per cent) were under 14 years of age than were those from the city of Springfield (49 per cent). In Massachusetts 28 child workers and in Connecticut 111—more than one-eighth of those included in the study in that State—were under 10 years of age.

Table 18 shows the age and sex of rural and city children who worked on the tobacco crop in the Connecticut Valley.¹⁸

TABLE 18.—*Age and sex of city and rural children who worked on the tobacco crop in the Connecticut Valley*

Age and sex	Children under 16 years of age											
	Connecticut						Massachusetts					
	Total		City (Hartford)		Rural (Hartford Co.)		Total		City (Springfield)		Rural (Hampshire Co.)	
	Num- ber	Per cent distrib- ution	Num- ber	Per cent distrib- ution	Num- ber	Per cent distrib- ution	Num- ber	Per cent distrib- ution	Num- ber	Per cent distrib- ution	Num- ber	Per cent distrib- ution
Total children.....	801	100.0	534	100.0	267	100.0	308	100.0	128	100.0	180	100.0
Under 10 years.....	111	13.9	35	6.6	76	28.5	28	9.1	5	3.9	23	12.8
10 years, under 12.....	182	22.7	108	20.2	74	27.7	59	19.2	16	12.5	43	23.9
12 years, under 14.....	359	44.8	271	50.7	88	33.0	103	33.4	42	32.8	61	33.9
14 years, under 16.....	144	18.0	118	22.1	26	9.7	113	36.7	63	49.2	50	27.8
Age not reported.....	5	.6	2	.4	3	1.1	5	1.6	2	1.6	3	1.7
Boys.....	547	100.0	385	100.0	162	100.0	184	100.0	74	100.0	110	100.0
Under 10 years.....	80	14.6	28	7.3	52	32.1	22	12.0	4	5.4	18	16.4
10 years, under 12.....	123	22.5	85	22.1	38	23.5	42	22.8	12	16.2	30	27.3
12 years, under 14.....	249	45.5	195	50.6	54	33.3	47	25.5	17	23.0	30	27.3
14 years, under 16.....	94	17.2	76	19.7	18	11.1	69	37.5	39	52.7	30	27.3
Age not reported.....	1	.2	1	.3			4	2.2	2	2.7	2	1.8
Girls.....	254	100.0	149	100.0	105	100.0	124	100.0	54	100.0	70	100.0
Under 10 years.....	31	12.2	7	4.7	24	22.9	6	4.8	1	1.9	5	7.1
10 years, under 12.....	59	23.2	23	15.4	36	34.3	17	13.7	4	7.4	13	18.6
12 years, under 14.....	110	43.3	76	51.0	34	32.4	56	45.2	25	46.3	31	44.3
14 years, under 16.....	50	19.7	42	28.2	8	7.6	44	35.5	24	44.4	20	28.6
Age not reported.....	4	1.6	1	.7	3	2.9	1	.8			1	1.4

¹⁸ A further idea of the extent of children's work on the tobacco crop in the Connecticut Valley may be gained from the figures furnished by the owners or managers of 12 tobacco farms in Connecticut visited by an agent of the Children's Bureau during the harvest season of 1923. They estimated that of approximately 3,645 workers employed on these 12 farms, about 1,600, or 44 per cent of the total number, were children under 16 years of age.

THE WORK OF CHILDREN IN TOBACCO CULTURE

Two types of tobacco, shade-grown and sun-grown, are produced in the Connecticut Valley. Most of the city children who go out to work are employed on the shade-grown tobacco, chiefly on the west side of the river; rural children work on both kinds. Shade-grown tobacco is picked, but sun-grown tobacco is harvested in the Connecticut Valley by cutting. Only a few of the child workers from the city performed any of the operations in tobacco culture except harvesting, but rural children helped in nearly all of them. Rural boys and girls do the same kinds of work, but this is not the case with the children from the city. More than 90 per cent of the city boys had worked in the fields exclusively, and 83 per cent of the city girls had worked in the sheds exclusively. The few boys who had worked in the sheds as well as in the fields had done so for brief periods when it was inexpedient to do field work on account of rain or heavy dew, or because the work at the barn had not been handled quickly enough.

Work before harvesting.

More than one-third of the rural children in both regions studied (a large proportion of whom were boys) had transplanted tobacco, usually by machine. (Pl. I, Fig. 3, facing p. 18.) A slightly larger proportion of these children (also mostly boys) had hoed and topped the plants, and more than one-half had removed suckers. No worming was done.

Harvesting.

Proportionately few children helped cut the sun-grown tobacco, but more than one-fourth (227 rural children and 65 from the cities) handed the cut tobacco to the workers who speared it upon the laths, two boys helping each spearer. (Pl. I, Fig. 5, facing p. 18.) Since the tobacco stalks must be kept up from the ground so that the leaves will not be injured, the smaller children must hold their arms out horizontally, and this is very tiring. More than one-half of the children who did this work were under 12 years of age.

Shade-grown tobacco is so named because a covering of cheesecloth or similar material is placed over it, supported on wires strung from 9-foot posts set in rows about 33 feet apart all over the field and not removed until the harvesting has been finished. Some of the plants attain a height of 8 feet, and the leaves of adjoining rows of plants extend well past each other. The child pickers are entirely hidden from view at harvest time, only the quick, crackling sound of the breaking leaves indicating their presence. As can readily be understood, the work is done in an extremely close and hot atmosphere.

Picking shade-grown tobacco was reported by 305 children from the Hartford city schools, all except 4 of whom were boys, and by 37 rural children in Connecticut. Rural children in Connecticut usually work only on sun-grown tobacco. In Massachusetts 140 children, approximately equal numbers from city and country, had picked tobacco. For the first of the four or five pickings which are necessary the smaller boys especially are employed. They sit upon the ground and hitch themselves along, or kneel or crawl along from one plant to the next. (Pl. II, Figs. 1 and 2, facing p. 19.) Turning from side

to side to pick from two rows at once, they carefully break off the lowest leaves and put them in neat piles under the plants, to be collected by other workers. To work in this manner and in such postures all day long puts considerable strain upon the muscles of the child workers. For the next picking some of the children stand (Pl. II, Fig. 3, facing p. 19), but many still kneel, preferring this to the constant stooping. The children always stand during the last two or three pickings, but the younger children have to reach higher than is easy for them in order to pick the upper leaves. (Pl. II, Fig. 4, facing p. 19.) Care must be exercised because shade-grown tobacco is used for the most part in cigars and if the leaves are broken they are valueless. The tobacco pickers are constantly under supervision and rarely become really proficient until after several weeks' experience, even though they can acquire a superficial knowledge of the work in a few hours.

More than one-fourth of all the children who had picked were less than 12 years old, and 34 of them were under 10 years of age. More than three-fifths of both the city and rural children who picked tobacco had worked a month or longer, and nearly one-fourth had picked for at least two months.

The piles of picked leaves are collected by boys who walk along between each two rows dragging baskets made of canvas over light metal frames, about 3 feet long, $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide, and 1 foot deep. The filled baskets (then weighing from 45 to 55 pounds) are dragged back to the edge of the field, where the leaves are put into trucks to be taken to the barn. Men or older boys usually drag baskets; yet more than one-fifth of the 98 Hartford boys who reported doing it were under 12 years of age. In Massachusetts only 35 (about equal numbers of city and rural children) had dragged baskets.

Shed work.

Stringing, known locally as sewing, is the next process after the leaves have been picked and conveyed to the barns. The girl or women workers stand behind tables placed end to end to form long benches. As a bundle of laths is brought to each stringer she threads the loose end of the string, which has already been attached to the lath, into a large needle, picks up one leaf from each of the two piles that have been placed before her by another worker, holds these two leaves face to face, and inserts the needle through the stems near the broken ends. When she has strung the required number of leaves (about 40) she slips the needle off the string, fastens the string securely to the end of the lath, and places the filled lath on a rack behind her.

The necessity of standing all day long and the soreness of the hands due to the constant use of the needle are the most unpleasant features of this work. Another disagreeable feature is the stickiness of the juice from the tobacco leaves, which stains the hands badly. The right hand can be protected somewhat by a piece of leather around the palm, which is used instead of fingers to push the needle through the leaves. The coolness of the barn, with its doors and ventilating slats open, makes the situation of these workers preferable in this respect to that of the pickers under the tent covering.

All except 15 of the 261 children who had strung tobacco were girls. In Connecticut most of the stringers were from the city, but in Massachusetts about as many rural as city children had strung.

A large proportion did the work for a month or more. In the two States 50 of the stringers were under 12 years of age.

In the two States 197 children had put the leaves in bunches upon the tables for the stringers. About two-fifths of these children were under 12 years of age. Almost one-third had worked at this task for a month or more.

Housing tobacco was reported by 174 children, mostly boys. As a rule they carried the filled laths from the racks behind the stringers to the men in the barn who placed them upon the tiers. Nearly one-third of these children were under 12 years of age. The picking up of leaves which fell from the laths as they were being hung or which had fallen from the racks or elsewhere was a job also reported by child workers. Another type of work mentioned by some was attaching the cords to the laths before stringing began, or putting new cords on those which were to be used a second time if there was a shortage of laths. This process consisted of cutting off the proper length of cord by a metal cutter on the wall, putting the end of the cord in a slit at the end of the lath, winding it tightly around the lath a couple of times and fastening it in the slit again, repeating the process at the other end of the lath with the other end of the cord.

After the tobacco has been cured the filled laths are taken down and the tobacco leaves stripped from them. The shade-grown tobacco is stripped by untying the cords, slipping off the leaves, and sometimes by tying the leaves in bunches before they are carried to the packers. (Pl. I, Fig. 6, facing p. 18.) A total of 160 children in Connecticut and 74 in Massachusetts had done this work.

Table 19 shows the operations in tobacco culture performed by rural and city children in the Connecticut Valley.

TABLE 19.—Operations in tobacco culture performed by city and rural children in the Connecticut Valley

Operations in tobacco culture	Children under 16 years of age											
	Connecticut						Massachusetts					
	Total		City (Hartford)		Rural (Hartford Co.)		Total		City (Springfield)		Rural (Hampshire Co.)	
	Number ¹	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number ¹	Per cent	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Total children	801	100.0	534	100.0	267	100.0	308	100.0	128	100.0	180	100.0
Field:												
Picking	342	42.7	305	57.1	37	13.9	140	45.5	75	58.6	65	36.1
Suckering	264	33.0	86	16.1	178	66.7	70	22.7	8	6.2	62	34.4
Handing	247	30.8	60	11.2	187	70.0	39	12.7	5	3.9	34	18.9
Topping	148	18.5	41	7.7	107	40.1	58	18.8	3	2.3	55	30.6
Hoeing	140	17.5	27	5.1	113	42.3	89	28.9	19	14.8	70	38.9
Transplanting	122	15.2	8	1.5	114	42.7	64	20.8	9	7.0	55	30.6
Dragging baskets	106	13.2	98	18.4	8	3.0	35	11.4	19	14.8	16	8.9
Preparing beds	98	12.2	1	.2	97	36.3	36	11.7			36	20.0
Cutting	97	12.1	20	3.7	77	28.8	58	18.8	6	4.7	52	28.9
Hauling	86	10.7	17	3.2	69	25.8	32	10.4	3	2.3	29	16.1
Shed:												
Stripping	160	20.0	25	4.7	135	50.6	74	24.0	3	2.3	71	39.4
Sewing	157	19.6	121	22.7	36	13.5	104	33.8	46	35.9	58	32.2
Handing	155	19.4	127	23.8	28	10.5	42	13.6	14	10.9	28	15.6
Housing	113	14.1	67	12.5	46	17.2	61	19.8	9	7.0	52	28.9
Tying	75	9.4	34	6.4	41	15.4	25	8.1	3	2.3	22	12.2

¹ Some children performed more than one operation.

Table 20 shows the operations in tobacco culture performed by children of different ages in the Connecticut Valley.

TABLE 20.—Operations in tobacco culture performed by children of different ages in the Connecticut Valley

Operations in tobacco culture	Children under 16 years of age										Age not reported ²
	Total		Under 10 years		10 years, under 12		12 years, under 14		14 years, under 16		
	Num-ber ¹	Per cent	Num-ber	Per cent ²	Num-ber	Per cent	Num-ber	Per cent	Num-ber	Per cent	
CONNECTICUT											
Total children	801	100.0	111	100.0	182	100.0	359	100.0	144	100.0	5
Field:											
Picking.....	342	42.7	26	23.4	70	38.5	185	51.5	60	41.7	1
Suckering.....	264	33.0	52	46.8	57	31.3	112	31.2	41	28.5	2
Handing.....	247	30.8	65	58.6	68	37.4	82	22.8	30	20.8	2
Topping.....	148	18.5	25	22.5	34	18.7	62	17.3	27	18.7	-----
Hoeing.....	140	17.5	22	19.8	26	14.3	56	15.6	34	23.6	2
Transplanting.....	122	15.2	29	26.1	32	17.6	44	12.3	17	11.8	-----
Dragging baskets.....	106	13.2	8	7.2	16	8.8	46	12.8	36	25.0	-----
Preparing beds.....	98	12.2	23	20.7	28	15.4	33	9.2	13	9.0	1
Cutting.....	97	12.1	9	8.1	16	8.8	48	13.4	24	16.7	-----
Shed:											
Stripping.....	160	20.0	35	31.5	40	22.0	60	16.7	24	16.7	1
Stringing.....	157	19.6	8	7.2	26	14.3	80	22.3	42	29.2	1
Handing.....	155	19.4	16	14.4	48	26.4	77	21.4	11	7.6	3
Housing.....	113	14.1	10	9.0	24	13.2	51	14.2	28	19.4	-----
MASSACHUSETTS											
Total children	308	100.0	28	-----	59	100.0	103	100.0	113	100.0	
Field:											
Picking.....	140	45.5	8	-----	31	52.5	44	42.7	54	47.8	3
Handing.....	39	12.7	7	-----	9	15.3	12	11.7	10	8.8	1
Hoeing.....	89	28.9	8	-----	21	35.6	23	22.3	35	31.0	2
Transplanting.....	64	20.8	8	-----	11	23.7	13	12.6	27	23.9	2
Cutting.....	58	18.8	9	-----	10	16.9	11	10.7	26	23.0	2
Shed:											
Stripping.....	74	24.0	11	-----	18	30.5	19	18.4	24	21.2	2
Sewing.....	104	33.8	5	-----	11	18.6	49	47.6	38	33.6	1
Handing.....	42	13.6	3	-----	7	11.9	17	16.5	15	13.3	-----
Housing.....	61	19.8	5	-----	17	28.8	15	14.6	22	19.5	2

¹ Some children performed more than one operation. ² Per cent not shown where base is less than 50.

OTHER FARM WORK OF CHILDREN

Although most of the city children had worked on tobacco only, most of the rural children had worked on corn, hay, and other crops, a majority of those in Massachusetts having worked on the onion crop. The rural districts of this State adjacent to the Connecticut area studied and along the river in the region from Northampton to Greenfield raise onions on a large commercial scale, and a great deal of hand labor is needed. Weeding must be done four or five times, and for the first weeding the child workers kneel down astride the rows and use both hands, aided occasionally by a small hook or weeder. For later weedings they stand and stoop over. Very little difference was noted in the ages of boys and girls who weeded, or in the length of time which they worked. Nearly two-thirds of the children worked two weeks or longer, and 24 (5 of whom were under 10 years of age) worked a month or more. Pulling is done in the same position as weeding. After the onions are dry the tops are clipped off with a large pair of shears, and the onions are sorted by means of a screen which is generally shaken by two small boys while larger boys or men dump the onions upon it. Bags to catch the onions as they fall

through the screen are pinned to the screen frame, usually by a child. During the screening the children must pick out any decayed or imperfect onions which they notice.

Table 21 shows the operations in onion culture performed by boys and girls who had also worked on the tobacco crop in Massachusetts.

TABLE 21.—*Operations in onion culture performed by boys and girls who had also worked on the tobacco crop; Massachusetts*

Operations in onion culture	Children under 16 years of age					
	Total		Boys		Girls	
	Num- ber ¹	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent	Num- ber	Per cent
Total children.....	308	100.0	184	100.0	124	100.0
Working on onion crop.....	115	37.3	78	42.4	37	29.8
Weeding.....	101	32.8	66	35.9	35	28.2
Clipping.....	86	27.9	58	31.5	28	22.6
Pulling.....	60	19.5	46	25.0	14	11.3
Planting.....	35	11.4	25	13.6	10	8.1
Screening.....	23	7.5	21	11.4	2	1.6

¹ Some children performed more than one operation.

LENGTH OF THE WORKING DAY

The following figures are for rural child workers only, since few of the city children were employed in any work other than harvesting the tobacco crop: Three-fifths (65) of the children in Connecticut and two-fifths (22) of those in Massachusetts who had transplanted had worked 8 hours or more on the day which they reported as typical,¹⁰ and approximately two-thirds in each State had worked at least 8 hours a day also in cultivating.

During the harvest season the working hours were longer for a great number of the children. In Connecticut 85 per cent and in Massachusetts 89 per cent of the child workers reporting the length of their working day (a larger proportion of city children than of rural children) had worked at least 8 hours a day; and about one-fifth of the child workers included in the study in the Connecticut Valley had worked 10 hours or more a day. A working day of at least 10 hours was more common in Connecticut than in Massachusetts, where the number of city children among the workers was smaller than in Connecticut. The hours of work at the shed were usually the same as in the field, since the same trucks brought all the workers; but some children doing shed work would shorten their lunch periods in order to work longer and make more money on the piece-work basis on which they were paid. Younger children worked a shorter day at harvest time than did the older ones, yet two-thirds of the children under 10 years of age had worked at least 8 hours and about one-sixth had worked 10 hours or more during this season. The majority of the city children began work at 7 a. m., took one hour for lunch at noon, and worked until 5 p. m. But so many had a long distance to go to work that the time consumed in transportation,

¹⁰ For definition of "typical" see footnote 8, p. 11.

added to the nine hours spent in actual work, made a very long working day. Some children traveled 5 miles to work, some even 10 miles. A few walked or rode in street cars, but the majority were taken back and forth in the employers' trucks.²⁰ Evidently the working hours of the rural children, although less regular, were frequently shorter.

Table 22 shows the length of a typical working day in harvesting tobacco for children of different ages in the Connecticut Valley.

TABLE 22.—*Length of typical working day in harvesting tobacco for children of different ages; Connecticut Valley*

Hours harvesting tobacco on a typical day	Children under 16 years of age										Age not reported ²
	Total		Under 10 years		10 years, under 12		12 years, under 14		14 years, under 16		
	Number	Per cent distribution ¹	Number	Per cent distribution ²	Number	Per cent distribution ²	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution	
CONNECTICUT											
Total children-----	612		100		141		266		101		4
Reporting hours-----	481	100.0	86	100.0	118	100.0	196	100.0	78	100.0	3
Less than 8 hours-----	73	15.2	26	30.2	25	21.2	13	6.6	7	9.0	2
8 hours, less than 10-----	293	60.9	46	53.5	65	55.1	127	64.8	55	70.5	
10 hours and more-----	115	23.9	14	16.3	28	23.7	56	28.6	16	20.5	1
Not reporting-----	131		14		23		70		23		1
MASSACHUSETTS											
Total children-----	199		21		43		58		73		4
Reporting hours-----	197	100.0	21		43		57	100.0	72	100.0	4
Less than 8 hours-----	21	10.7	4		4		5	8.8	8	11.1	
8 hours, less than 10-----	152	77.2	13		32		46	80.7	57	79.2	4
10 hours and more-----	24	12.2	4		7		6	10.5	7	9.7	
Not reporting-----	2						1		1		

¹ Per cent distribution is based on the number reporting rather than on the total, because of the large proportion of children in Connecticut not reporting hours of work.

² Per cent distribution not shown where base is less than 50.

DURATION OF EMPLOYMENT

About two-fifths of both the rural and city children had worked at least two months on tobacco in the field or shed or in both places. Many of these started as soon as harvesting began in July and continued until it was completed in September. Some of the rural children among them, however, worked at the beginning of the season and then did little or no work until harvest time. In both States the proportion of children who had worked two months or longer was

²⁰ Although all the plantations are expected to furnish enough trucks to give every person a seat (usually one truck for women and girls and one for men and boys) sometimes there is not enough room for every child to have a seat, and sometimes the children stand because they prefer to for the sake of indulging in such play as is possible. One accident due to overcrowding of the trucks which resulted in slight injury to several of the children, and another which caused the death of a child, were reported to an agent of the Children's Bureau.

greater among those employed only in the sheds than among those employed in the fields, for shed work is continuous throughout the harvest; and was greatest among those who worked in both shed and held. Rural children, especially boys who had worked on other crops as well as on tobacco, had been employed longest.

Table 23 shows the duration of employment of rural and city children in field and shed work on the tobacco crop in the Connecticut Valley.

TABLE 23.—Duration of field and shed work of children employed in tobacco culture, classified by age; Connecticut Valley

Duration of work on tobacco crop	Children under 16 years of age											
	Connecticut						Massachusetts					
	Total		City (Hartford)		Rural (Hartford Co.)		Total		City (Springfield)		Rural (Hampshire Co.)	
	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution ¹	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution ¹	Number	Per cent distribution ¹
Total children -----	801	100.0	534	100.0	267	100.0	308	100.0	128	100.0	180	100.0
Less than 1 month	133	16.6	94	17.6	39	14.6	51	16.6	26	20.3	25	13.9
1 month, less than 2	279	34.8	201	37.6	78	29.2	144	46.8	64	50.0	80	44.4
2 months, less than 3	286	35.7	220	41.2	66	24.7	76	24.7	33	25.8	43	23.9
3 months, less than 4	50	6.2	8	1.5	42	15.7	16	5.2	2	1.6	14	7.8
4 months and more	21	2.6	2	.4	19	7.1	11	3.6	-----	-----	11	6.1
Not reported	32	4.0	9	1.7	23	8.6	10	3.2	3	2.3	7	3.9
Children doing field work only	184	100.0	134	100.0	50	100.0	74	100.0	50	100.0	24	-----
Less than 1 month	53	28.8	36	26.9	17	34.0	21	28.4	14	28.0	7	-----
1 month, less than 2	69	37.5	50	37.3	19	38.0	31	41.9	22	44.0	9	-----
2 months, less than 3	53	28.8	45	33.6	8	16.0	17	23.0	13	26.0	4	-----
3 months, less than 4	4	2.2	2	1.5	2	4.0	3	4.1	-----	2.0	3	-----
4 months and more	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Not reported	5	2.7	1	.7	4	8.0	2	2.7	1	2.0	1	-----
Children doing shed work only	165	100.0	153	100.0	12	-----	73	100.0	29	-----	44	-----
Less than 1 month	32	19.4	28	18.3	4	-----	6	8.2	3	-----	3	-----
1 month, less than 2	49	29.7	46	30.1	3	-----	42	57.5	18	-----	24	-----
2 months, less than 3	74	44.8	71	46.4	3	-----	19	26.0	7	-----	12	-----
3 months, less than 4	5	3.0	4	2.6	1	-----	3	4.1	1	-----	2	-----
4 months and more	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	2	2.7	-----	-----	2	-----
Not reported	5	3.0	4	2.6	1	-----	1	1.4	-----	-----	1	-----
Children doing field and shed work	452	100.0	247	100.0	205	100.0	161	100.0	49	-----	112	100.0
Less than 1 month	48	10.6	30	12.1	18	8.8	24	14.9	9	-----	15	13.4
1 month, less than 2	161	35.6	105	42.5	56	27.3	71	44.1	24	-----	47	42.0
2 months, less than 3	159	35.2	104	42.1	55	26.8	40	24.8	13	-----	27	24.1
3 months, less than 4	41	9.1	2	.8	39	19.0	10	6.2	1	-----	9	8.0
4 months and more	21	4.6	2	.8	19	9.3	9	5.6	-----	-----	9	8.0
Not reported	22	4.9	4	1.6	18	8.8	7	4.3	2	-----	5	4.5

¹ Per cent distribution not shown where base is less than 50.

EARNINGS OF CHILD WORKERS

The commercial scale on which tobacco is raised in the Connecticut Valley has caused the rates of pay for both daywork and piecework to be standardized. As nearly all of the children included in the study had worked on the large plantations they had been paid for their work. The daily wages for the majority varied from \$1.50 to \$3, the younger children receiving the smaller amounts. For much of the shed work the payment was on a piecework basis, as from 30 to 50 cents per bundle of 50 laths. Many workers could finish four bundles in a day, although some did less, and a few could finish as many as eight bundles. The boys who did shed work, such as housing, taking down laths, or stripping, were usually paid the same flat rate as for picking and often did one or more of these tasks on the same day on which they did some picking.

Most of the children who reported pay had harvested. Almost all who had transplanted or done other work preliminary to harvesting were rural children who had worked for their own parents, and the few who had been paid for it received something less than \$2 a day. Three-fourths of the children in Massachusetts and five-sixths of those in Connecticut who had helped to harvest received pay for their work. For their last day's work in harvesting more than one-half of those in Connecticut and about one-third of those in Massachusetts received from \$1 to \$2; one-half in Massachusetts and more than one-third in Connecticut were paid from \$2 to \$3; and 22 children, proportionately more in Massachusetts, had received \$3 or more a day. The smaller proportion of workers in Connecticut who received the larger amounts was doubtless due to the fact that the proportion of workers under 14 years of age was larger than in Massachusetts.²¹

The season's earnings for work on tobacco were reported by 473 of the 534 child workers from Hartford and 101 of the 128 child workers from Springfield. More than one-fourth of the Hartford children and about two-fifths of the Springfield children had earned less than \$50 during the season, and one-third of the Hartford children and about one-fifth of the Springfield children had earned \$100 or more. The Springfield children had not worked so long as the children from Hartford. In both States more than three-fourths of the children whose total earnings were less than \$100 had worked less than two months, while more than three-fourths of those in Massachusetts and nearly nine-tenths of those in Connecticut whose earnings were \$100 or more had worked two months or longer. Little difference was noted in the earnings of boys and girls.

Table 24 shows the earnings of children from Hartford and Springfield who were employed on the tobacco crop in the Connecticut Valley.

²¹ Some cases were reported during the 1923 season in which child workers were paid less than the amount which they alleged had been agreed upon during the early part of the season when labor was scarce.

TABLE 24.—*Season's earnings of children from Hartford and Springfield who worked on the tobacco crop; Connecticut Valley*

Season's earnings at work on tobacco crop	Children under 16 years of age							
	Total		Duration of work on tobacco crop					
			Less than 1 month		1 month, less than 2		2 months and over	
	Num-ber	Per cent distri-bu-tion	Num-ber	Per cent distri-bu-tion ¹	Num-ber	Per cent distri-bu-tion	Num-ber	Per cent distri-bu-tion ¹
HARTFORD								
Total children.....	534	100.0	92	100.0	202	100.0	231	100.0
Reporting season's earnings.....	473	88.6	83	90.2	182	90.1	208	90.0
Less than \$50.....	135	25.3	80	87.0	51	25.2	4	1.7
\$50, less than \$100.....	182	34.1	3	3.3	112	55.4	67	29.0
\$100, less than \$150.....	131	24.5			19	9.4	112	48.5
\$150 and more.....	25	4.7					25	10.8
Not reporting season's earnings.....	61	11.4	9	9.8	20	9.9	23	10.0
SPRINGFIELD								
Total children.....	128	100.0	22		64	100.0	38	
Reporting season's earnings.....	101	78.9	19		53	82.8	28	
Less than \$50.....	41	32.0	15		24	37.5	1	
\$50, less than \$100.....	41	32.0	4		25	39.1	12	
\$100, less than \$150.....	14	10.9			4	6.3	10	
\$150 and more.....	5	3.9					5	
Not reporting season's earnings.....	27	21.1	3		11	17.2	10	

¹ Per cent distribution not shown where base is less than 50.

THE EFFECT OF FARM WORK ON SCHOOLING

In Massachusetts the minimum school term is 160 days, and in Connecticut it is 190 days.²² In this region the work of children on farms, especially their work on tobacco, does not affect school attendance as conspicuously as in the Southern States. One reason is the better enforcement of the compulsory attendance law. The other is the fact that harvesting is usually completed here before the opening of school; and if it is not, the opening of the rural schools is sometimes postponed for a week or two until the harvesting is finished.

Of the children in Connecticut for whom attendance records were obtained, 60 per cent of those in the rural districts and 94 per cent of those in Hartford had been present during at least nine-tenths of the school session. All the Hartford children and 85 per cent of the rural children had been present at least 80 per cent of the term. In Massachusetts 71 per cent of the rural children for whom attendance records were obtained were present 90 per cent of the term or more; and 35 of the 46 Springfield children whose attendance records could be obtained had been present at least 90 per cent of the term.

As a consequence of the longer school term and the better school attendance in Massachusetts and Connecticut than in the other tobacco-producing regions studied, many more of the children working on the tobacco crop in the Connecticut Valley were receiving

²² Massachusetts, General Laws 1921, ch. 71, sec. 1, as amended by Acts of 1921, ch. 360; Connecticut, General Statutes, Revision of 1918, ch. 45, sec. 851, as amended by Acts of 1921, ch. 45.

an adequate number of days of schooling. Of the 539 children in Connecticut for whom records were obtained 456 (more than five-sixths) had attended school 160 days or more during the year. In Massachusetts, where the legal minimum school term was shorter than in Connecticut, a smaller proportion (one-half) had attended school for 160 days or more.

About one-third (33 per cent) of the pupils in Massachusetts and about one-sixth (18 per cent) of the pupils in Connecticut for whom school records were obtained attributed some of their absence to farm work. However, the total time lost for farm work was very short, as almost three-fifths of the 175 pupils reporting absence due to this cause had missed less than 5 days, and only 21 pupils, or 12 per cent, had missed so much as 10 days for farm work.

Except for the children living in the city of Hartford, the amount of retardation in school was comparatively small. There was less retardation among the children in the rural districts of Massachusetts than among any other group of rural children which has been studied by the Children's Bureau. Among the children in the rural districts of Connecticut there was less retardation than among any other group of child workers which has been studied, except in Massachusetts and among a group of children working on their home farms or on farms near their homes in certain districts in the States of Washington and Oregon.²³ The percentage of Springfield children who were retarded was lower than the average for city school children.²⁴ Among the Hartford children the lowest retardation was that of children of native white fathers, 36 per cent as compared with 41 per cent and 68 per cent for children of foreign-born fathers and negro fathers, respectively. But even the children of native white parentage were considerably more retarded than the average city child.

Table 25 shows the progress in school of city and rural children who worked on the tobacco crop in the Connecticut Valley.

TABLE 25.—*Progress in school of city and rural children who worked on the tobacco crop in the Connecticut Valley*

Progress in school	Children 8 to 15 years of age, inclusive											
	Connecticut						Massachusetts					
	Total		City (Hartford)		Rural (Hartford Co.)		Total		City (Springfield)		Rural (Hampshire Co.)	
	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution	Number	Per cent distribution
Total children.....	777	100.0	531	100.0	246	100.0	305	100.0	127	100.0	178	100.0
Retarded.....	293	37.7	234	44.1	59	24.0	47	15.4	19	15.0	28	15.7
1 year.....	155	19.9	121	22.8	34	13.8	26	8.5	10	7.9	16	9.0
2 years.....	79	10.2	61	11.5	18	7.3	14	4.6	5	3.9	9	5.1
3 years or more.....	59	7.6	52	9.8	7	2.8	7	2.3	4	3.1	3	1.7
Normal.....	367	47.2	233	43.9	134	54.5	115	37.7	30	23.6	85	47.8
Advanced.....	81	10.4	34	6.4	47	19.1	60	19.7	6	4.7	54	30.3
Retardation not reported.....	36	4.6	30	6.6	6	2.4	83	27.2	72	56.7	11	6.2

²³ Child Labor in Fruit and Hop Growing Districts of the Northern Pacific Coast, pp. 16, 44. Children's Bureau Publication No. 151. Washington, 1925.

²⁴ The average percentage of retardation for city school children is 26.6. This figure is based on age-grade statistics from Statistical Survey of Education, 1921-22, p. 17, by Frank M. Phillips (U. S. Bureau of Education Bulletin, 1924, No. 38, Washington, 1925).

SUMMARY

In three typical tobacco-growing districts, consisting of parts of Shelby and Christian Counties in Kentucky, Florence County in South Carolina and Halifax County in Virginia, and the Connecticut Valley region in New England, a study was made of the work of a total of 2,278 children who had worked at least 12 days on the tobacco crop of 1922. The kinds of work done were noted, the length of the typical working day, the duration of employment, the earnings of the children, their absence from school due to work on the tobacco crop or other farm work, and the effect of such absence upon the progress in school of the child workers.

In Kentucky the study included 563 children, representing nearly two-fifths of the number whom it was possible to interview in the schools selected; in South Carolina and Virginia it included 606 children, or about one-half of those interviewed; and in the Connecticut Valley it included 1,109 children, of whom 447 were from rural districts (about one-half of these interviewed in the selected schools) and 662 were from selected schools in Hartford, Conn., and Springfield, Mass. About two-thirds of the children included in the study in the Southern States, and two-thirds of those in New England were boys. Nearly one-half of the child workers in the South and more than one-third of those in the Connecticut Valley were under 12 years of age, and about one-fifth in the South and more than one-tenth in the Connecticut Valley were under 10.

Negroes constituted about one-third of the child workers in Kentucky and one-fourth of those in South Carolina and Virginia. In the Connecticut Valley almost all were white but of foreign parentage.

Most of the children included in the study worked long hours and were employed for a considerable length of time. Very few reported working less than 8 hours a day, and 10 hours was the usual length of the working day for a number of them. A day of 10 or more hours was typical for nearly one-fourth of the child workers in the Connecticut Valley, nearly one-third in South Carolina, about two-thirds in Virginia, and two-fifths in Kentucky. Older children, especially boys, had uniformly worked longer than younger ones; and in the Southern States they were employed quite continuously from early spring until all the tobacco was harvested in the fall. Since the growing season is longer in the South and the Southern children worked on various crops in addition to tobacco, these children reported a greater number of days of employment than was usual among the New England children. One-third of the Kentucky children and slightly more than one-third of those in South Carolina and Virginia had worked at least three months, as compared with less than one-tenth of those in the Connecticut Valley. Girls in the South do practically the same work as boys, except that a smaller number of girls perform operations requiring a great deal of physical strength. In New England work was rather differentiated for the two sexes at harvest time, boys being employed in the fields and girls in the sheds.

Comparatively light tasks may become fatiguing if performed continuously for a long time. Weeding, hand transplanting, hoeing, topping, suckering, worming, and picking compel the child to bend or stoop steadily while his hands are busy; and small children must

at times kneel or sit and hitch themselves along in this posture; or near the end of the season must reach higher than is easy; or must hold their arms horizontally with the heavy stalks which they hand to the spearers. Machine work involves continuous walking, managing of horses or mules, and regulation of the machine, whether it be comparatively simple like a plow or more complicated like a cultivator. The children's task on a transplanting machine is feeding, and they must pay constant attention, with the eyes always downward, in order to drop the plants into the machine at the proper moment. Much work on the tobacco and other crops is done when the summer heat is at its worst, with the aggravation in New England of a close atmosphere due to cloth coverings over shade-grown tobacco; and the odor of the tobacco plants is often sickening.

Child labor on the tobacco crop in the South could be materially reduced by measures to reduce the amount of time and labor spent in suckering and in worming. That such measures are possible has been pointed out by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, which states that the necessity for suckering can be largely avoided by the selection of strains of tobacco that have little tendency to produce suckers²⁵ and calls attention to the "general inefficiency" of hand worming and the success which has followed the use of arsenate of lead as an insecticide.²⁶

In New England less than one-third of the city children who reported their earnings for the season received under \$50; more than one-third earned between \$50 and \$100; one-fourth between \$100 and \$150; and only one-twentieth earned \$150 or over. The daily wage for rural children who worked on the large tobacco plantations in the Connecticut Valley was the same as that for city children working on the same plantations, but many of the rural children worked on home farms and received no payment. In the Southern States the daily wage even for hired laborers was less standardized, and most of the child workers belonged to the families of tenants and small landowners who depended upon the members of their families to take care of the tobacco acreage. When children in these families received pay for their work it usually consisted of the profit from a certain acreage or crop. Children often worked away from the home farm in exchange for farm work done for their parents.

Many children in the southern districts studied (where the school terms are short) were kept out of school for farm work, the average absence for this reason being from 15 to 19 days. A great deal of retardation was found among white children as well as among negroes. In the Connecticut Valley the school terms are longer, the compulsory attendance laws more strictly enforced, and the school attendance noticeably better among the child workers. The amount of school retardation among these workers was comparatively small, except for some city children, notably negro children and those of foreign parentage, many of whom presumably were handicapped by the fact that a foreign language was spoken in the home.

²⁵ U. S. Department of Agriculture, Farmers' Bulletin No. 416, p. 12.

²⁶ U. S. Department of Agriculture, Farmers' Bulletin No. 1356, p. 1.



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